The Hudson Review

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

JOSEPH KERMAN writes music criticism regularly for THE HUDSON REVIEW; his next article will be on Alban Berg's *Wozzeck*.

ROBERT FITZGERALD teaches at Sarah Lawrence and has published poems and translations from the Greek.

PAUL BLACKBURN is a young poet who works in a print shop in Manhattan.

W. S. MERWIN is now residing in London and is having a verse-play produced on the B.B.C. His first book of verse, *A Mask for Janus*, is due from Yale University Press.

GEORGE P. ELLIOTT has just finished a novel of which *Faq'* forms a part.

ANTHONY HECHT and JAMES MERRILL, both previous contributors, are at present living and working in Rome.

GENE BARO is a young writer living in Florida.

HAROLD KAPLAN teaches at Bennington and is at work on a volume of poetry.

GEORGE STILES has written stories and plays; he lives in Boston.

GEOFFREY RANS is a young English critic, published here for the first time.

VIVIAN MERCIER is a co-editor of *One Thousand Years of Irish Prose*, to be published soon by Devin-Adair.

RAY B. WEST, JR., editor of the *Western Review*, is traveling in Europe.

JOSEPH FRANK is living in Paris, and working on a book on Flaubert.

HUGH KENNER has recently completed a book on James Joyce and is commencing one on Pope and Johnson.

C. ROLAND WAGNER is doing advanced study at Yale and Columbia. His review in this issue is his first published work.

SONYA RUDIKOFF has written on art for this Review; she lives in Hanover, N. H

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EURIPIDES

The Cyclops

Characters of the Play

SILENUS
CHORUS OF SATYRS
CORYPHAEUS (*Chorus-Leader*)
ODYSSEUS
CYCLOPS
SLAVES

SCENE: *an enormous cave at the foot of Mt. Etna. In the foreground, a slope of pasture; on the right, a small brook.* SILENUS *comes out of the cave to speak the prologue. He is old, fat and bald. A horse's tail hangs down his legs. He wears a filthy tunic and carries a rake.*

SILENUS. O Bromios,
thanks to you, my troubles are as many now
as in my youth when I was strong and hale.
First I remember when Hera drove you mad
and you left your nurses, the mountain nymphs.
Then there was the war against the Giants:
I stood on your right and covered your flank
with my spear. And I hit Enceladus[1]
in the middle of his shield and killed him.
Or wait: was that in a dream? No, by Zeus,
for I showed the very spoils to Bacchos.
And now I must bail against a bigger wave
of trouble. For when I heard that Hera
had roused those Lydian pirates to sell you
as a slave abroad, I set sail with my sons
to look for you. Right on the stern I stood,
the tiller in my hands, steering the boat.

[1]Everybody in the Athenian audience would have known that it was Athena, not Silenus, who had killed the Titan, Enceladus. Their amused gasp at Silenus' effrontery is indicated in his next words: "Or wait: was that in a dream?" The audience was prepared to find Silenus lewd, fat, drunk, bald, knavish, boasting and foolish. At almost every point, Silenus' lineal descendant is Falstaff.

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And my boys pulled at the oars, churning white
the green sea in our search for you, my king!
We had almost made Malea
when an east wind burst down and drove us here,
to rocky Etna, where the one-eyed sons
of the sea-god, the murdering Cyclops,
live in their desolate caves. One of them—
they call him Polyphemus—captured us
and made us slaves in his house. And now,
instead of dancing in the feasts of Bacchos,
we herd the flocks of this godless Cyclops.
Down at the foot of the mountain, my sons—
they are young men—watch the herd of younglings.
I am assigned to stay and fill the troughs
and clean the quarters and play the chef
for the Cyclops' abominable meals.
And now I must clean the cave with this rake—
these are my orders—to welcome back home
my absent master and his flock of sheep.

[*He halts suddenly, turns to the left and looks. A confused hubbub, mingled with singing, offstage.*]

But I see my sons shepherding their sheep
this way. What? [*Shouts*] How can you dance like that?
Do you think you're mustered at Bacchos' feast
and mincing your lewd way with lyre-music
to the halls of Althaea?

[*Preceded by a flute-player and driving their herds before them, the chorus of satyrs bounds into the orchestra. Except for short goat-skin jerkins, they are naked. About their waists they wear belts—skin-colored—to which is fixed, in front, a phallus, and in the rear, a horse's tail. They do a series of fast and intricate steps as they push the stubborn rams, coax the sheep, and round up the strays.*]

CHORUS. [*to a ewe who dashes for the slope*]

You there, with the fine pedigree
On both sides, dam and sire,
Why run for the rocks?

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Haven't you here a quiet breeze,
And grass for the grazing?
Look: the water from the brook
Beside the cave
Swirls through your troughs
And the small lambs bleat.

[*to an obstinate ram*]

Hey, you too? Are you off as well
To crop on the dew on the hill?
Move, or I'll pelt you with stones!
In with you, horny-head, move along
Into the fold of Shepherd Cyclops.

[*to a stubborn ewe*]

Relieve your swollen teats!
Come, suckle your young whom you left
Alone in the lamb-pens!
Asleep all day, your new-born lambs
Bleat that they want you.
Leave your cropping and into the fold,
Into the rocks of Etna!

No Bacchos here! not here the dance,
Or the women whirling the thyrsus,
Or the timbrels shaken,
where the springs rill up!
And no more at Nysa with nymphs,
Crying *Iacchos! Iacchos!*
Where is Aphrodite?—
She that I used to fly after
Along with the bare-footed Bacchae!
Dear Lord Bacchos, where are you running now,
Tossing your yellow hair?
For I, your servant, am a wretched slave
Tricked out in dirty goatskin
To serve a one-eyed Cyclops,
And out of the way, Lord, of your love.

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[SILENUS, *who has been surveying the horizon on the right, turns suddenly, his finger on his lips.*]

SIL. Be quiet, children. Order the servants
to corral the flocks into the rock-fold.

CORYPHAEUS. Move along, there.
[*Servants appear and hustle the animals into the cave.*]
But why the hurry, father?

SIL. I see a Greek ship drawn up on the beach
and oarsmen led by their captain coming
toward our cave. They carry water-pitchers
and empty containers around their necks:
they'll want supplies. Poor strangers, who are they?
They can't know our master Polyphemus,
coming like this to the maneater's cave
and looking for a welcome in his jaws.
But hush, so we can learn where they've come from,
and why, to Sicily and Mt. Etna.

[ODYSSEUS *appears on the right. He carries a sword. A wine-flask made of skin is suspended from his neck; a cup is attached to the cord. He is followed by crew-members carrying pitchers and jugs.*]

ODYSSEUS. Strangers, would you tell us where we might
find running water? We have nothing to drink.
Would some one of you like to sell some food
to hungry sailors? What? Do I see right?
We must have come to the city of Bacchos.
These are satyrs I see around the cave!
Let me greet the oldest among you first.

SIL. Greetings, stranger. Who are you, and where from?

ODY. I am Odysseus of Ithaca, king of the Cephallenians.

SIL. I've heard of you: a glib sharper, Sisyphus' bastard.[2]

[2]Literally the Greek reads "race of Sisyphus". Euripides, however, has two fathers for Odysseus. The *Odyssey* made Odysseus' father Laertes; and this was the accepted account. But Euripides, who almost consistently blackens Odysseus, here makes Silenus greet him as the bastard son of Sisyphus. In the *Iphigenia at Aulis* Odysseus is "Laertes' son" to the chorus of admiring women; to Agamemnon his enemy, he is "seed of Sisyphus". Euripides' hostility in this play as elsewhere is probably due to his recasting of epic and mythological material into fifth-century terms. When so recast, the heroic Odysseus of the *Odyssey* becomes the smooth-tongued, evil-advising counsellor of expediency—the fifth-century demagogue.

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ODY. I am he. Keep your remarks to yourself.

SIL. Where did you sail from to get to Sicily?

ODY. We came from Troy and the war there.

SIL. What? Didn't you know your way home?

ODY. We were driven here by wind and storms.

SIL. Too bad. I had the same misfortune.

ODY. Then you too were driven here by storms?

SIL. We were chasing the pirates who captured Bacchos.

ODY. What is this place? Is it inhabited?

SIL. This is Etna, the highest mountain in Sicily.

ODY. Where are the walls and the city-towers?

SIL. There is no city, stranger. The coast is uninhabited—
by men.

ODY. Then who does inhabit it? Wild animals?

SIL. The Cyclops. They live in caves, not houses.

ODY. Who governs them? Do they have a democrocy?

SIL. They are savages. They obey no authority at all.

ODY. How do they live? By agriculture?

SIL. Their whole diet is milk, cheese and meat.

ODY. Do they grow grapes and make wine?

SIL. Least of all. The land is sullen.

ODY. Are they hospitable to strangers?

SIL. Strangers, they say, make very nice eating.

ODY. What? Are they cannibals?

SIL. Every visitor here is devoured.

ODY. Where is this Cyclops now? In the . . . house?

SIL. Gone hunting on Etna with his pack.

ODY. What should we do to make our escape?

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SIL. I don't know, Odysseus. We'll do everything we can.

ODY. Then sell us some bread. We have none left.

SIL. There is nothing to eat, I said, except meat.

ODY. Meat will drive away our hunger quite nicely.

SIL. We do have fig-cheese; and there is milk.

ODY. Then bring it out. They buyer should see what he gets.

SIL. Tell me, how much are you willing to pay?

ODY. In money, nothing. But I have some . . . wine.

SIL. Delicious word! How long since I've heard it!

ODY. This wine was given me by Maron, son of a god.

SIL. Not the lad I once reared in these arms?

ODY. The son of Bacchos, to be brief.

SIL. Where is the wine? on board ship? Do you have it with you?

ODY. In this flask, old man. Look for yourself.

SIL. That? That wouldn't make one swallow for me.

ODY. No? For each swallow you take, the flask will give two.

SIL. A fountain among fountains, that! I *like* it.

ODY. Will you have it unwatered to start with?

SIL. That's fair. The buyer ought to have a sample.

ODY. I have a cup here to go with the flask.

SIL. Pour away. A drink will joggle my memory.

ODY. [*Unstoppers the flask, pours out a cup and waves it under Silenus' nose.*]
There you are.

SIL. Mmmmm. Gods, what a bouquet it has!

ODY. Can you *see* it?

SIL. No, by Zeus, but I can whiff it.

ODY. Have another. You'll sing its praises.

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SIL. Mmmmaa. A dance for Bacchos! La de da.

ODY. Did that go down smoothly?

SIL. Right down to the tips of my toenails.

ODY. Besides the wine, we'll give you money.

SIL. Just pour out the wine. Money be damned.

ODY. Then bring out your cheese, or some lambs.

SIL. Right away.
I don't care a hoot for any master.
I would go mad for one cup of that wine!
I'd give away the herds of all the Cyclops.
Once I get drunk and happy, I'd go jump
in the sea off the Leucadian rock!
The man who doesn't like to drink is mad.
Why, when you're drunk, you stand up stiff down here
[*gestures*]
and then get yourself a fistful of breast
and browse on the soft field ready to your hands.
You dance, and goodbye to troubles. Well then,
why shouldn't I adore a drink like that
and be damned to the stupid Cyclops
with his eye in the middle? [*He enters the cave.*]

COR. Listen, Odysseus, we would like a word with you.

ODY. By all means. We are all friends here.

COR. Did you take Helen when you took Troy?

ODY. We rooted out the whole house of Priam.

COR. When you took that woman, did you all take turns
and bang her? She liked variety in men,
the fickle bitch! Why, the sight of a man
with embroidered pants and a golden chain
so fluttered her, she left Menelaus,
a fine little man. I wish there were
no women in the world—except for me.

[SILENUS *reappears from the cave, his arms loaded with wicker panniers of cheese; he leads some young lambs.*]

SIL. King Odysseus, here are some lambs for you,

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the fat of the flock, and here, a good stock
of creamed cheeses. Take them and leave the cave
as fast as you can. But first give me a drink
of that blessed wine to seal our bargain.
Help us! Here comes the Cyclops! What shall we do?

ODY. We are as good as dead, old man. Where can we run?

SIL. Into the cave. You can hide in there.

ODY. Are you mad? Run into the trap?

SIL. No danger. The rocks are full of hiding-places.

ODY. [*Grandiloquently*]
Never. Why, Troy itself would groan aloud
if we ran from one man. Many's the time
I've stood off ten thousand Phrygians with my shield.
If die we must, we must die with honor.
If we live, we live with our old glory!

[*The satyrs run pell-mell around the orchestra; Silenus slinks into the cave. On the left appears a bearded man, of great height. He holds a club and is followed by dogs.*]

CYCLOPS. Here. Here. What's going on? What's this uproar?
Why this Bacchic hubbub? There's no Bacchos here,
no bronze clackers or rattling castanets!
How are my new-born lambs in the cave?
Are they at the teat, nuzzling their mothers?
Are the wicker presses filled with fresh cheese?
Well? What do you say? Answer, or my club
Will drub the tears out of you! Look up, not down.

COR. There. We're looking right up at Zeus himself.
I can see Orion and all the stars.

CYC. Is my dinner cooked and ready to eat?

COR. Ready and waiting. You have only to bolt it.

CYC. And are the vats filled up with milk?

COR. You can swill a whole hogshead, if you like.

CYC. Cow's milk, or sheep's milk, or mixed?

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COR. Whatever you like. Only don't swallow me.

CYC. You least. I'd soon be dead if I had you
jumping through your capers in my belly.

[*Turning, he sees the Greeks near the cave.*]
Hey! what's that crowd I see over by the cave?
Have pirates or thieves taken the country?
Look: sheep from my fold tied up with withies!
And cheese-presses all around! And the old man
with his bald head swollen red with bruises!

[SILENUS *comes out of the cave, groaning; he is red-faced from the wine.*]

SIL. Ohhhh. I'm all on fire. They've beaten me up.

CYC. Who did? who's been hammering your head, old man?

SIL. [*Indicating Greeks*]
They did, Cyclops. I wouldn't let them steal from you.

CYC. Didn't they know I was a god? that my ancestors are gods?

SIL. I tried to tell them. But they went on robbing.
I tried to stop them from stealing your lambs
and eating your cheeses. What's more, they said
they would yoke you to a three-foot collar
and squeeze out your bowels through your one eye,
and scourge your backsides with a whip.
And then they were going to tie you up
and throw you on a ship and give you away
for lifting rocks or for work at a mill.

CYC. Is that so? Run and sharpen my cleavers.
Take a big bunch of faggots and light it.
I'll murder them right now and stuff my maw
with their meat hot from the coals; why wait
to carve? I'm fed up with mountain food:
too many lions and stags and too long
since I've had a good meal of manmeat.

SIL. And quite right, master. A change in diet
is very pleasant. It's been a long time
since we've had visitors here at the cave.

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ODY. Cyclops, let your visitors have their say.
We came from our ship to your cave because
we wanted to buy stores. This fellow here
sold us some lambs in exchange for wine,
all quite voluntary; no coercion.
There's not a word of truth in his tale.
The fact is he was caught selling your goods.

SIL. I? Damn your soul.

ODY. If I'm lying.

SIL. I swear, Cyclops, by your father Poseidon,
by Triton the great and Nereus, I swear
by Calypso and by Nereus' daughters,
by the holy waves and every kind of fish,
I swear, dear master, sweet little Cyclops,
I did not sell your goods to the strangers!
If I did, let all my dear children perish!

COR. And the same to you. With these very eyes
I saw you selling goods to the strangers.
And if I'm lying, then let my father
die for it. But don't do wrong to strangers.

CYC. You're lying. I would rather believe him
[*he indicates Silenus*]
than Rhadamanthus himself. And I say
that he's right. But I want to question you.
Where did you sail from, strangers? and where to?
And tell me in what city you grew up.

ODY. We are from Ithaca. After we sacked
the city of Troy, sea-winds drove us here,
safe and sound, to your country, Cyclops.

CYC. Was it you who sacked Troy-on-Scamander
because that vile Helen was carried off?

ODY. We are, and our terrible task is done.

CYC. You ought to die for shame: to go to war
with the Phrygians for a single woman.

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ODY. A god was responsible; don't blame men.
But we ask as free men, we implore you,
do not, o noble son of the sea-god,
murder men who come to your cave as friends.
Do not profane your mouth by eating us.
[*He waxes rhetorical.*]
For it is we, my lord, who everywhere
in Greece preserved your father Poseidon
in the tenure of his temples. Thanks to us,
Taenarus' sacred harbor is intact,
and the shrines of Malea inviolate;
the peak of Sunium, with its silver-lodes
sacred to Athena, is still untouched;
and safe, the sanctuaries of Geraistos!
We did not betray Greece—perish the thought!—
to Phrygians. And you have a share in this:
for this land, under volcanic Etna,
in whose depths you live, is a part of Greece.
[*The* CYCLOPS *nods in disapproval.*]
In any case—if you disagree—
all men honor that custom whereby
shipwrecked sailors are clothed and protected.
Above all, they should not gorge your mouth and paunch,
nor be spitted as one would spit an ox.
The land of Priam has drained Greece too much,
soaked up the blood of thousands killed in war:
wives made widows, women without their sons,
old men turned snow-white. If you roast the rest
for your ungodly meal, where will Greece turn?
Change your mind, Cyclops! Forget your hunger!
Forget this sacrilege and do what is right.
Many have paid the price for base profits.

SIL. A word of advice, Cyclops. If you eat
all of his flesh and chew on his tongue,
you'll become eloquent and very glib.

CYC. Money's the wise man's religion, little man.
The rest is mere bluff and purple patches.
I don't give a damn for my father's shrines

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along the coast! Why did you think I would?
And I'm not afraid of Zeus's thunder;
in fact, I don't believe Zeus is stronger
than I am. And anyway, I don't care,
and I'll tell you why I don't care. When Zeus
pours down rain, I take shelter in this cave
and feast myself on roast lamb or venison.
Then I stretch myself out and wash down the meal,
flooding my belly with a vat of milk.
Then, louder than Zeus can thunder, I fart
through the blankets. When the north wind sweeps down
with snow from Thrace, I wrap myself in furs
and light up the fire. Then let it snow
for all I care! Whether it wants or not,
the earth must grow the grass that feeds my flock.
And as for sacrifices, I make mine—
not to the gods, but to the greatest god of all—
to this belly of mine! To eat and drink
from day to day, to have no worries—
that's the real Zeus for your clever man!
As for those who embroider human life
with their little laws—damn the lot of them!
I shall go right on indulging myself—
by eating you. But, to be in the clear,
I'll be hospitable and give you fire
and my father's water—plus a cauldron.
Once it starts to boil, it will render down
your flesh very nicely. So, inside with you,
and gather round the altar to the god
of the cave, and wish him a good dinner.

[*The Cyclops enters the cave, driving Odysseus' crew before him.*]

ODY. Gods! Have I escaped our hardships at Troy
and on the sea only to fall victim
to the whim of this stone-hearted savage?
O Pallas, lady, daughter of Zeus, now
if ever, help me! Worse than war at Troy,
I have come to my danger's deepest place.

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O Zeus, god of strangers, look down on me
from where you sit throned among the bright stars!
If you do not look down upon me now,
You are no Zeus, but a nothing at all!

[*He disappears into the cave;* SILENUS *follows him.*]

CHORUS. Open the vast O of your jaws, Cyclops!
Dinner is served: the limbs of your guests,
Boiled, roasted or broiled, ready for you
to gnaw, rend and chew
While you loll on your shaggy goatskin.

Don't ask me to dinner. Stow that cargo
On your own. Let me keep clear of this cave,
Well clear of this Cyclops of Etna,
this loathsome slaughter!
He gorges himself with the flesh of his guests!

Savage! stranger to mercy! this monster
Who butchers his guests on his hearth,
Who boils up their flesh and bolts it,
whose foul mouth grinds on food
Of human flesh snatched hot from the coals!

[ODYSSEUS *comes out of the cave, carrying the flask.*]

ODY. Zeus, how can I tell what I saw in that cave?
Unbelievable horrors, the kind of things
men do in stories, not in real life!

COR. Has that god-forsaken Cyclops butchered
your crew? Tell us what happened, Odysseus.

ODY. He snatched up two of my men, the soundest
and heaviest, and weighed them in his hands.

COR. How horrible! How could you bear to watch?

ODY. First, after we had gone into the cave,
he lit a fire and threw down on the huge hearth
logs from a vast oak—you would have needed
three wagons merely to carry the load.
Then he pulled up his bed of pine-needles
close to the fire. After he milked his sheep,

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he filled a hundred-gallon vat with milk.
By his side, he put an ivywood box,
almost four feet in width and six feet deep.
Then he put a cauldron of brass to boil
on the fire, and beside it thorn-wood spits
whose points had been sharpened in the coals
and the rest trimmed down with an axe. There were
bowls for catching blood, as big as Etna,
and set flush against the blade of the axe.
When this damned cook of Hades was ready,
he snatched up two of my men; with one blow
he slit the throat of one over the lip
of the brass cauldron. Holding the other
by the heel, he slammed him against a rock
and bashed out his brains. Then he hacked away
the flesh with his terrible cleaver
and put the pieces to roast on the fire.
The leftovers he tossed in the pot to boil.
With the tears streaming down, I went up close
and waited on the Cyclops. The others,
their faces ashen, huddled up like birds
in the crannies of the rocks. Then he leaned back,
bloated with his awful meal on my men,
and let out an enormous belch. Just then
some god sent me a marvellous idea!
I filled a cup and gave him Maron's wine
to drink. "Cyclops", I said, "son of the sea-god,
see what a heavenly drink yield the grapes
of Greece, the gladness of Dionysos!"
Glutted with his awful meal, he took it
and drained it off at one gulp, then lifted
his hand in thanks: "You are the best of guests!
You have given me a good drink to crown
a good meal." When I saw how pleased he was,
I poured him another, knowing the wine
would shortly fuddle him and pay him back.
Then he started to sing. I poured one drink
after another and warmed his belly.
So there he is, inside, singing away

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while my crew wails: you can hear the uproar.
I slipped quietly out. Now, if you agree,
I'd like to save myself and you as well.
So tell me, yes or no, whether you want
to escape this monster and live with the nymphs
in the halls of Bacchos. Your father in there
agrees, but he's weak and loves his liquor.
He's stuck to the cup as though it were glue,
and can't fly. But you're young, so follow me
and rescue yourselves and find your old friend
Dionysos. He's not like this Cyclops.

COR. My good friend, if only we could see the day
when we escape from this godless Cyclops!
[*Showing his phallus*]
This poor hose has been a bachelor
a long time. But we can't eat the Cyclops *back*.

ODY. Listen to my plan for setting you free
and getting revenge on this loathsome beast.

COR. Tell on. I would rather hear tell of his death
than listen to all the harps in Asia.

ODY. He is so delighted with Bacchos' drink
he wants to carouse with his relatives.

COR. I see. You'll set an ambush in the woods
and kill him—or push him over a cliff.

ODY. No, I had something more subtle in mind.

COR. I thought from the first you were sly. What then?

ODY. I hope to stop his going to this spree
by saying he shouldn't give his wine away,
but keep it for himself and live in bliss.
Then, after he falls asleep from the wine,
I'll take my sword and sharpen up the trunk
of an olive-tree I saw inside the cave.
I'll put it in the coals and when it's caught,
I'll shove it home, dead in the Cyclops' eye
and blind him. Just like a timber-fitter

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whirling his auger around with a belt,
I'll screw the brand in his eye, round and round,
scorch out his eyeball and blind him for good.

COR. Bravo! I'm for your plan with all my heart.

ODY. And finally I'll embark you, my friends,
and your old father on board my black ship
and sail at full speed away from this place.

COR. May I lend a hand at this ritual?
Help hold the pole when you put out his eye?
This is one sacrifice I want to share.

ODY. You must. The brand is huge. You all must lift.

COR. I could lift up a hundred wagon-loads
so long as Cyclops died a wretched death!
We'll smoke out his eye like a hornets' nest.

ODY. Be quiet now. You know my stratagem.
When I give the word, obey your leaders.
I refuse to save myself and leave my men
trapped in there. I could, of course, escape:
here I am, outside. But I have no right
to abandon my crew and save my own skin.

[ODYSSEUS *goes back into the cave.*]

CHO. Who'll be first along the brand? who next?
We'll shove it square in the Cyclops' eye!
We'll rip away his sight!
Quiet.
Shhh.

[POLYPHEMUS *appears between* ODYSSEUS *and* SILENUS. ODYSSEUS *carries the flask and cup.* SILENUS *holds a pitcher and a mixing-bowl.*]

Here he comes, flat offkey drunkard,
Reeling out of his home in the rock,
Braying some wretched tune. Ha, we'll
Give this oaf a lesson in carousing!

[CYCLOPS *stumbles blindly about.*]

A little while: then, perfect blindness!

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1ST SEMICHORUS. Happy the man who cries *Evohé!*
Stretched out full length and making merry,
For whom the wine keeps flowing,
Whose arms are open to his friend!
Lucky man, upon whose bed there blows
The soft bloom of a lovely girl
With gleaming hair, sweet with oil!
Who cries: "Who'll open me the door?"

CYCLOPS. Mamama. Am I crammed with wine!
How I love the fun of a feast!
The hold of my little ship
Is stuffed right up to the gunwales!
This marvellous meal reminds me:
I should go feast in the spring air
With my brothers the Cyclops.
Here, here, my friend, give me the flask.

2ND SEMICHORUS. O the flash of a handsome Eye!
Handsome himself comes from his house,
our good friend, Handsome!
For you the torch is burning,
A soft bride burns for this groom
In the cool of the cave!
Soon we'll wreathe his head
with a wreath of flowers!

ODY. Listen, Cyclops, I've spent a lot of time
with this drink of Bacchos that I gave you.

CYC. What sort of god is this Bacchos held to be?

ODY. Best of all in blessing the lives of men.

CYC. [*Belching*] At least he makes very pleasant belching.

ODY. That's the kind of a god he is: hurts no one.

CYC. How can a god bear to live in a flask?

ODY. Wherever you put him, he's quite content.

CYC. Gods shouldn't shut themselves up in wine-skins.

ODY. What matter, if you like him? Does the flask irk you?

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CYC. I hate the flask. The wine is what I like.

ODY. Then you should stay here and enjoy yourself.

CYC. Shouldn't I give some wine to my brothers?

ODY. If you keep it for yourself, it will enhance you.

CYC. It's more generous to share with my brothers.

ODY. Yes, but carousing often ends in fights.

CYC. I'm so drunk that nothing could hurt me.

ODY. My dear man, drunkards ought to stay at home.

CYC. But the man's a fool who drinks by himself.

ODY. It's the wise man who stays home when he's drunk.

CYC. What should I do, Silenus? Should I stay home?

SIL. I would. Why do we want more drinkers, Cyclops?

CYC. [*Yawning*] Anyway, the ground is soft and flowers . . .

SIL. There's nothing like a drink when the sun's hot.
Lie down there, stretch yourself out on the ground.
[CYCLOPS *obediently lies down, and furtively,* SILENUS *puts the bowl behind his back.*]

CYC. There. Why have you put the bowl behind my back?

SIL. Some one might tip it over.

CYC. You wanted
to steal a drink. Put it in the middle.
You there, stranger, tell me what your name is.

ODY. Nobody's my name. But how will you reward me?

CYC. I will eat you the last of all your crew.

SIL. That's a fine gift to give your guest, Cyclops.
[*He drains a cup.*]

CYC. What are you doing? Drinking on the sly?

SIL. The wine kissed me—for my beautiful eyes.

CYC. Watch out. You love the wine; it doesn't love you.

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SIL. Yes, by Zeus, it has a passion for my good looks.

CYC. Here, pour me a cupful. But just *pour* it.

SIL. How is it mixed? Let me taste and see. [*He takes a pull.*]

CYC. Damnation, give it here.

SIL. By Zeus, not before
I see you crowned. [*He offers* CYCLOPS *a crown of flowers.*]
—And then have another drink.
[*He empties the cup.*]

CYC. This wine-pourer is a cheat!

SIL. Not at all.
The wine's so good it goes down by itself.
Wipe yourself off before you drink again.

CYC. [*Wipes his face and beard.*]
There. My mouth is clean and so is my beard.

SIL. Then crook your arm—gracefully now—and drink—
Just as you see me drink—and now you don't.
[*Drains cup.*]

CYC. Here! What are you doing?

SIL. Drinking with gusto.

CYC. [*Snatching away the cup and handing it to* ODYSSEUS.]
Here, stranger, take the flask and pour for me.

ODY. At least the wine feels at home in my hand.

CYC. Come on: pour!

ODY. I *am* pouring. Be quiet.

CYC. That's not so easy when you're in your cups.

ODY. There, take it up and drink down every drop,
and don't say die until the wine is gone.

CYC. Mama. What a wizard the vine must be!

ODY. If you drench yourself on a full stomach
and swill your belly full, you'll sleep deep.
If you leave any, Bacchos will shrivel you up.

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CYC. [*Reeling*] Whoosh! I can scarcely swim out of this flood.
Pure pleasure! Ohh. Earth and sky going round,
all mixed up together! Look. I can see
the throne of Zeus and the holy glory
of the gods.
[*The satyrs dance around him, suggestively.*]
No, I couldn't make love to you!
The Graces tempt me! My Ganymede here
[*He grabs* SILENUS]
is good enough for me; with him I'll sleep
magnificently. By these Graces, I will!
And anyway, I prefer boys to girls.

SIL. Am I Zeus' little Ganymede, Cyclops?

CYC. By Zeus, you are! the boy I stole from Dardanos.

SIL. I'm done for, children. Foul things await me.

CYC. Sneer at your lover, do you, because he's drunk?

SIL. It's a bitter wine I'll have to drink now.
[CYCLOPS *drags him off into the cave.*]

ODY. To work, you noble boys of Dionysos!
Our man's inside the cave. In a short while
his belly will heave its foul meal of flesh.
Look, the brand has begun to smoke inside.
We prepared it for just this: to smoke out
the Cyclops' eye. Now you must act like men.

COR. Our will is made of unbreakable rock.
But hurry inside before *that* happens
to my father. All is ready out here.

ODY. [*Prays*] O Hephaistos, ruler over Etna,
free yourself from this vile neighbor of yours!
Sear out his bright eye at one blow! O Sleep,
child of black Night, leap with all your might
on this god-detested beast! And do not,
after our glorious trials at Troy,
betray Odysseus and his crew to death
from a man who cares for neither man nor god.

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If you do, we will make a goddess of Luck
and count her higher than all the other gods!
[*He disappears into the cave.*]

CHORUS. Grim tongs shall clutch by the throat
This beast that bolts down his guests;
Fire will quench the fire of his eye.
The brand, as big as a tree, already waits,
Waits in the coals.

On wine, to your work!
Rip out the eye of this raving Cyclops!
Make him regret the day he drank you!
But let me leave this wilderness!
What I want with all my heart to see
Is Bacchos, the god who loves the ivy!
Shall I ever see that day?

ODY. [*Coming out of the cave*]
Quiet, you dogs! By the gods, be quiet!
Hold your tongues. I don't want a man of you
to wink or clear his throat or even breathe.
If we wake up that scourge of evil,
we won't be able to burn out his eye.
[*The satyrs freeze into silence. The following dialogue is conducted entirely in whispers.*]

COR. We *are* quiet. Our mouths are locked up tight.

ODY. Then to work. And grab the brand with both hands
when you go in the cave. The point is red-hot.

COR. You should tell us our stations. Who'll be first
on the blazing pole? And then we can all
take our part in searing out the Cyclops' eye.

1ST PARASTATE. Where we stand, over here by the entrance,
we're too far away to reach his eye.

2ND PARASTATE. [*Limping in pain*]
And just this very minute we've gone lame.

1ST PARA. And I have too. While we were standing here
we sprained our ankles, I don't know how.

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ODY. Sprained your ankles, standing still?

2ND PARA. And my eyes
Are full of dust and ashes from somewhere.

ODY. What cowards! I won't get any help from you.

COR. And because I feel for my back and spine,
and don't want to have my teeth knocked out,
I'm a coward, am I? But I can say
a fine Orphic spell that will make the brand
fly of its own accord into the skull
of this one-eyed whelp of Earth and scorch him up.

ODY. I knew from the start what sort you were;
and now I know it better. If you're too weak
to lend a hand, at least cheer on my men
and put some heart in them by shouting.
[*Goes into the cave.*]

COR. We'll shout, and this "Nobody" will run the risks.
We'll fuddle the Cyclops with our shouting.

CHORUS. [*They dance frenziedly, shouting at the tops of their lungs, and imitating the action taking place in the cave.*]
Go! Go! as hard as you can!
Push! Thrust! Faster! Burn off
The lashes of the guest-eater!
Smoke him out, burn him out,
The shepherd of Etna!
Twist it! Turn! Careful:
He is hurt and desperate.
[*A great shriek from within the cave.*]

CYC. Owwoooooo. My eye is scorched to ashes.

COR. O song of songs! Sing it for me, Cyclops!

CYC. Owwoo. They've murdered me. I'm finished.
You won't escape from this cave to enjoy
your triumph, you contemptible scum.
I'll stand at the entrance and block it—so!
[*He appears at the threshold of the cave, and stretches his arms across it; his face streams with blood.*]

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COR. What's the matter, Cyclops?

CYC. I'm dying.

COR. You look terrible.

CYC. I feel terrible.

COR. Were you so drunk that you fell in the fire?

CYC. Nobody wounded me.

COR. Then you're not hurt.

CYC. Nobody blinded me.

COR. Then you're not blind.

CYC. Blind as you.

COR. How could nobody have made you blind?

CYC. You mock me. Where is Nobody?

COR. Nowhere, Cyclops.

CYC. It's the stranger I mean, you fool, the one
who stuffed me full of wine and did me in.

COR. [*Sententiously*] Wine is tricky; very hard to wrestle with.

CYC. By the gods, has he escaped or is he inside?

COR. There they are, standing quiet over there,
under cover of the rock.

CYC. On which side?

COR. On your right.

[*The* CYCLOPS *leaves the entrance and stumbles with outstretched hands toward the right. Meanwhile the Greeks steal out of the cave.*]

CYC. Where?

COR. Over against the rock.
Do you have them?

CYC. [*Runs into a jutting rock*] Ouf. Trouble on trouble.
I've split my head.

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COR. And now they've escaped you.

CYC. This way, did you say?

COR. No, the other way.

CYC. Which way?

COR. Turn around. There. On your left.

CYC. You're laughing at me in my misery.

COR. Not now. There he is in front of you.

CYC. Where are you, demon?

[*The Greeks stand at the entrance on the right, a whole length of the stage away from the* CYCLOPS.]

ODY. Out of your reach,
Looking after the safety of ODYSSEUS.

CYC. What? A new name? Have you changed your name?

ODY. ODYSSEUS: the name my father gave me.
But you had to pay for your unholy meal.
I would have done wrong to set fire to Troy,
and not revenge the murder of my men.

CYC. Ahh. The old oracle has been fulfilled.
It said that, after you had come from Troy,
you would blind me. But you would pay for this,
it said, and wander the seas for many years.

ODY. Much I care! What's done is done. As for me,
I'm off to the shore where I'll launch my ship
on the Sicilian sea and sail for home. (*Exit*)

CYC. Not yet. I'll rip a boulder from this cliff
and crush you with all your crew beneath it.
Blind I may be, but I'll reach the mountain-top
soon enough through this tunnel in the cave.

[*Exits into cave.*]

CHO. We'll enlist in the crew of Odysseus.
From now on our orders come from Bacchos.

[*Translated by William Arrowsmith.*]

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE:

Interest in Euripides' *Cyclops* is generally justified historically: other than a chunk of Sophocles' *Ichneutae*, it is the only extant example of a satyr-play, the ribald piece which crowned the three tragedies or the tragic trilogy which preceded it. But unlike comedy, the satyr-play used the lengendary material of tragedy: the *Oresteia* was followed by a satyr-play dealing with the adventures of Menelaus in Egypt; the *Cyclops* is a conflation of the Polyphemus episode from the *Odyssey* and the story of the capture of Dionysos by pirates. In treatment, the satyr-play was sportive, even farcical, not so much comedy as tragic mockery. In controlling idea, for instance, the *Cyclops* is much closer to the *Bacchae* than to the *Lysistrata*. How much the satyr-plays of Aeschylus or Sophocles resembled the *Cyclops*, we have no way of knowing; but considering the enormous inversions Euripides performed on the tragic pattern, it seems unlikely the resemblance was close.

But the *Cyclops* is more than historically interesting; it is, by modern standards, good fast farce, clearly stageworthy, with a fine dramatic intelligence behind it. The development is typically Euripidean: the ironic shift of sympathy from Odysseus to Cyclops; the sudden inversion of roles, as Odysseus, the civilized man, resorts to a savage vengeance on a savage suddenly transformed into a decadent, almost lovable, buffoon. Against Polyphemus' cannibalism is balanced his abhorrence of war, his indignation against Helen, his generosity with his wine; finally, drunk and singing, his amorous "rape" of Silenus. Meanwhile Odysseus becomes vainglorious, a sophist orator, glib, with all the resources of a depraved intelligence. And back of it all is Dionysos, manifest in the wine, taking his revenge on the "Monster" who has enslaved his servants—the admirable Silenus and the satyrs. The *Cyclops*, like the *Heracles* and the *Orestes*, should be recovered for Euripides.

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JOSEPH KERMAN

Beethoven: the Single Journey

Quartet in A minor, Op. 132

FOR A MUSIC CRITIC THERE IS nothing more formidable, more challenging, and more dangerous than the attempt to fix in words the emotional implications of a piece of music; assuming his belief in the existence, and the specific existence, of such emotional implications. This belief of course covers many glaring fallacies. The only writer who has taken the right set of coordinates, and used them in any half-systematic way, is J. W. N. Sullivan, in *Beethoven: His Spiritual Development.* The book falls short, in my opinion, mainly on account of the author's lack of musical knowledge; it is as though a mathematician lacked the calculus, which makes Sullivan's perception all the more extraordinary, and his courage in trying the job all the more admirable. I find it hard, maybe impossible, to avoid the issue with Beethoven's later music.

On this plane, the intuitive key to the Quartet in A minor is that it represents a single realized journey; the movements form the continuity of an emotional pattern which is profoundly complex and articulate. Though darkly aware of the various stages, I can be as confident of this fact and of its primacy as of any other perception, major or minor, in art. It is no doubt a truism; Beethoven had all his life been interested in molding the cyclic work into a psychological whole, rather than the series of interrelated tableaux that was the classical ideal. Only in the A minor and the C-sharp minor Quartets did he approach this issue with the gravity and full consciousness of his last years.

On another plane, every composition by Beethoven can be examined in terms of its answer to a conscious technical problem or problems. Here analysis may be projected on to the plane of insight; and somewhere the surfaces intersect.

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I: *Assai sostenuto—allegro*

The first problem was in plotting the first movement. Opening movements always have had, and still have, a tendency towards conclusiveness; often they are straightforward and uncomplex—with Bach and even Mozart. But Beethoven had found in the sonata-form an ideal scheme to express the most elaborate psychological currents in his opening movements. In the history of the sonata-form, examples become less and less like one another, but they all tend to reach finality within a single highly-organized movement. Especially with Beethoven, the form assumed a generalized pattern: diversity and latent conflict; conflict in action; consummation in resolution. The more truly this is carried out, the more the first movement assumes a self-contained position, and the more difficult it becomes for later movements to compete with it for relevance in the total work.

> *Ninth Symphony: the final triumph of this scheme for the opening movement. The* allegro *sums up Beethoven's intention; in a way there is nothing to be added. The trouble with the symphony, if there is any trouble, is not so much in the problematic* finale, *or its ideology, as in the exhaustiveness of each movement. The first of Beethoven's great opening movements, in the Third Symphony, an incredible composition for 1803, succeeded in stifling the symphony as a whole. Beethoven was unable to stand up to it in the following movements, as he was in the Ninth.*

This kind of first movement, which Beethoven made peculiarly his own, was clearly not right for the piece he now had in mind.

Of course, on the other hand, there are many opening movements which are coordinated, even subordinated, to the entire composition: the Sixth Symphony, Quartets Op. 59 no. 3, Op. 127. But however beautiful and inevitably right these may be, they are comparatively simple; Beethoven's insight is never employed to the full. Such a movement is used in the C-sharp minor Quartet, which followed the A minor, a work which with its seven interlocked movements goes further still in creating a single continuous vision. The opening fugue is fundamentally static in terms of the sonata style. Conventionally this Quartet is considered an even greater masterpiece than the A minor; I do not

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know; it certainly lacks the intense continuous involvement of the A minor. At any rate it is characteristic of the man that Beethoven should have first attempted, in Op. 132, a movement that should fit into the whole and yet retain all the psychological depth that he was accustomed to sound in his opening movements. In other words, the piece had to be in sonata-form, or something like it.

But in accordance with Beethoven's desire to reduce its dominance, the *allegro* of Op.132 exhibits an intensity of inconclusiveness. Its main emotional subject is frustration, informed always by that extraordinarily heightened consciousness which Sullivan singles out as the essential quality of the last quartets. I wish to show in a moment how this is accomplished by the material and the form. No reaction to frustration, no treatment of it, could be further from the bluster and melodrama of the late romantics, or from the poignant recoil of Schubert, yet none could be more relevant. Every bar of the movement deals with pain, but Beethoven's customary attitudes of fortitude, defiance, or deflection are replaced by a transcendent introspection, without self-pity, cleverness, or posturing. To an unparalleled degree this movement is bound up with the exigencies of suffering; it is too close, it would be intolerable if it were not a completely *realized* experience. It involves the special terror of a mature comprehension of futility without resignation or sublimation; the conflict is perfectly understood as useless and inexorable. The action of the movement is real, but from the start it will achieve no progress. The height of awareness and the depth of involvement with reality here contrast with the other parts of the Quartet: the second and third movements are several times removed from reality, whereas the *finale* treats a simpler subject with more intensity, but with more limited insight—in the manner of Beethoven's "second period"—until the concluding *presto*.

Under the following headings I can perhaps indicate how I think this is achieved musically (but little more than indicate, for it takes ant-like analysis to document, let alone demonstrate).

The introduction-figure and its use. The four-note motive of the opening *assai sostenuto* (G#—A—F—E, but just as frequently inverted into F—E—G#—A) has been called a primitive "four-tone row", for a good deal of the material throughout the

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Quartet can be seen to incorporate these four notes pointedly, prominently, or incidentally—the more inspired the analysis, the more pervasive the thematic figure. I find it hard to persuade myself that most of these "transformations" are of actual aesthetic importance, however. To the extent that I so consider them, I note them in the following discussion; but on the whole this matter is much more interesting to the *composer*-analyst than to the *listener*-analyst. The fact that the same "row" appears in the other late quartets indicates to me exactly the position of this technique in Beethoven's scheme.

In itself, untransformed, the four-note introduction-figure plays a role in the first movement only, and here a primary role. It is too bare to be called strictly expressive, at least on the level of the rest of the material in this abnormally articulate movement. The steps of a minor second are here as it were of a ritual sadness, forming an elemental matrix against which the profile of the main fast theme, less timeless, is always reflected. For this introduction-figure, in its ordinary form, is unusually organic; it is at once revealed as a counterpoint to the first fast theme, and then recurs with it constantly throughout the movement. I think this is the most evocative double-counterpoint in all music. The four notes of the introduction-figure also appear in the fast theme itself, but it is especially the downward semitone step that quietly dominates the movement, and in the end, less quietly, the entire Quartet.

Beethoven uses the introduction-figure to emphasize all main formal divisions, somewhat as in the first movement of the Ninth. The development, the "recapitulation", and the coda are all punctuated off by an appearance of at least part of the slow figure, alone. The start of the coda is particularly meaningful (bars 193-4, poignant echo of 103-6). But the motive is technically so simple and emotionally so generalized, that it is hard to hear it in successive appearances as a strong recapitulation. Rather it is always present as a shadowy recollection, imprecise, pervasive, subliminal. See notably 232-5, within the coda.

Parody recitative; rhythmic flux. To start his quartet, Beethoven plays the introduction-figure successively four times, in its original shape, inverted, or transposed. There is no rhythmic variety, the harmonies fall into a recurrent pattern, and the effect

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is actually drab save for the abrupt *crescendo* at the end. Then with a sudden tearing the full texture yields to a long glissando-like slide on the first violin, actually an arpeggiated diminished-seventh, two bars in *allegro,* down two octaves and up, like a madly distorted flourish of recitative. Immediate in context, grotesque only in retrospect, this shock is the first and most violent of an endless series in this movement. More than anything else rhythmic flux characterizes the piece.

Beethoven was always fascinated by the idea of instrumental recitative, of course, especially late in life. He had never gone so far from any conceivable human vocal line, from any of the conventional formulae of this most conventional of musical genres. Yet I think here he retained and intensified the quality which he sought above all: the almost directly human expression, sub-artistic, the "naked human voice", as Thomas Mann calls it. After this scream the nervous first theme is played, but the parody recitative breaks it again and again.

You cannot repeat a recitative precisely. The very few changes from the exposition in the "recapitulation" of this movement mostly concern these recitative-like passages.

An obvious echo occurs at the end of the fourth movement, *alla marcia,* but there things are less fine, less removed from the lights and the grease-paint.

Chief themes. The first theme: Beethoven even presents it backstaged; the precipitous violin ends with an irregular accent on the last beat of its second bar, which cripples in advance any statement which can follow. And the theme is plaintive, strangely flexible and dubious. How can such a theme generate, indeed dominate, a sonata-form movement? Unnatural nervous energy, imparted by the sublest rhythmic flux and dynamic variation, is substituted for strength.

A canonic idea, on the way to the second theme. In the coda (bar 214ff.) there is particular lassitude in its inability to modulate and its functionless leapings.

The second theme, in the major mode, is of a lyric beauty unusual for Beethoven. It encompasses all of Schubert's comprehension of humanity, but non-Schubertian is its clarity, awareness, and transcendence of pain. The pity is it goes by so fast; Schubert with his own pathos would have clung to it ten times as long.

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This theme recurs only in the "recapitulation" and the coda, each time with the accompaniment heightened. At the last appearance an astonishing translucence is achieved by omitting its first three anacrustic notes, and its last bar is bent back pathetically to the minor mode in which the movement must end.

The development nullified. The movement has every instinct towards sonata-form, but it is characteristic that the development procedure, Beethoven's special tool, in which the strength and complexity of his "second period" concentrated, had to be suggested and at the same time invalidated. In the brief development he purposely aborts two developmental climaxes, which seem otherwise quite conventional.

(A) at the first peak, a sudden halt is followed by a new figure, unprepared and never developed beyond five bars here—brittle octaves, no harmony, at the extreme low range of the 'cello and viola, answered by the violins to form the angular two-part counterpoint (see Haydn's *Hexen-Menuett*) that Beethoven liked to manipulate at this time. It is one thing to introduce a new theme in a development section, anticipated and responsible: Beethoven's Third, Mozart's A major Quartet, K.464. It is another thing to stop *in medias res* and inject a whimsical notion just to distract the climactic urge which may not, in this movement, be consummated.

(B) the second, analogous peak is answered, dramatically, by a hard plunge into a *fortissimo* unison, the start of the introduction-figure. This seems the strongest gesture yet; but what can it imply at this place? The important thing is that we expect continued developmental modulations, for there has been nothing firm about this presentation of the introduction-figure—just the reverse, its transitoriness is emphasized by the fact that the cadence leading to it is merely a weaker echo of another, heard a few bars back. The development sounds as though it had just begun, and is just getting its stride. Instead the texture thins, *fortissimo* cedes to *piano*, and worst of all there are no more modulations, but repetitions of the introduction-figure, rooted in place, suddenly receding behind varieties of the first theme, its counterpoint. Unnatural emphasis for a passing event! Is this undercut stabilization a reference to the introduction which opened the movement?—the listener may not be specifically con-

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scious of it, but the passage has exactly the number of bars as the *assai sostenuto.* You cannot be sure; the place is equivocal; the success of the *fortissimo* unison is lost in doubt, ironically deflected in retrospect. With the fascination of inevitability of a dream, the music breaks again into the recitative-like scale of the violin, down two octaves and up.

> *Ninth Symphony: the same sort of technique used with an opposite effect. See Tovey's essay. Again the development is interrupted unexpectedly. But this development is one of Beethoven's hugest, and is digressing in epic style. It is suddenly struck down by a stroke of terror which is impossible to mistake for anything but the recapitulation. This is strong as steel, where the Quartet is dubious.*

The first theme follows inevitably, its pathos sensibly heightened by minute embellishments to the melody which were foreshadowed in the development. We are already, somehow, in some kind of recapitulation.

"Recapitulation"? The recapitulation of a sonata-form movement is supposed to do two things, and these things are supposed to be inseparable: to rehearse freely the material of the exposition; and to unite the whole in the tonic key. In this unity is strength; for Beethoven the recapitulation became more and more a point of triumph: in the Ninth Symphony, but already in the First.

Again this will not do in Op.132. The passage which follows the truncated development repeats the material of the exposition very closely, but it certainly is not in the tonic key. Of this the listener cannot be sure, but there are two facts (and this is the point) of which he *can* be sure, very sure: first, that whatever key this "recapitulation" begins in, it has been prepared in a completely (deliberately) unsatisfactory, unstable, distressing fashion; and second, that whatever key this "recapitulation" begins in, it doesn't have the strength to maintain itself: the section *modulates* exactly as the exposition did. So there is further indecision. Instead of the consummation of a tonic recapitulation, we hear an obsessive repetition in a strange hallucinatory region, or regions. Only after this repetition has run its course do we settle into a coda which is at last all in the tonic; and it is no accident that Beethoven again runs through his chief thematic material in a compressed form.

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The functions of recapitulation are thus split between the two sections, and the whole philosophy of the sonata-form is disastrously challenged.

A strong rhythmic figure. At the end of the first theme (bar 20) energy is finally concentrated into a rhythmic figure of four even *marcato* quarter-notes. It is almost the only fragment in the whole movement, with its wealth of diverse material, which has the kind of resolution embodied in the typical motives of Beethoven's "second period". This figure is systematically undermined. It appears frequently, but the affirmation is always diverted by a *subito piano*, a *ritardando*, or a pathetic halt. Indeed the rhythmic flux of the movement begins to center on this figure. Thus bars 20 and 212-3, perhaps the most articulate spot in the movement; 73, and 188ff., a parallel section with the effect immeasurably deepened; 91 and 102, the frustrated peaks of the development; 258ff., the end of the coda; and even bar 40.

Coda. As I have said, this coda passes in fast review the chief themes of the movement, united in the tonic key. Curiously, they each acquire a little tail-end; not enough for a real feeling of development, but enough to connote aspirations or possibilities denied. After the second theme is darkened into the minor mode, the coda is suddenly very brilliant as it becomes more clearly cadential. The first theme and the introduction-figure reappear in various guises, accompanied by tremblings in the middle voices which assume heroic pretensions that sadly fail. *Fortissimo* falls yet again to *pianissimo*; the oscillations are damped out; the theme itself turns to a *morendo* (the last of the nervous rhythmic interruptions) in which its essential interval, the descending second, is isolated out, reiterated, exposed mercilessly as an empty formula, and abandoned. In eleven bars more the violent action is revived, together with gestures from the not-so-strong rhythmic figure in quarter-notes. These are patently ineffectual, and the movement ends with carefully prepared, almost contemptuous haste.

Nothing has been concluded.

II: *Allegro ma non tanto*

This is to me the fascinating movement—this, not the *heiliger Dankgesang*. I claim no perfect understanding of the piece, far

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from it, but the standard commentators are calamitously off:

> At all events the effect of this *alternativo* of the A minor Quartet is electrifying, and we have often witnessed an entire audience join with the Master in a kind of bacchanalian frenzy.
>
> It cannot actually be denied that the following note-for-note repetition of the main section involves a slight enfeeblement of the powerfully excited mood . . .
>
> —Theodor Helm, 1885.

> As Marx here acutely observes, the *scherzo* of Op.127 grows in conception bar by bar, with an ever-increasing range of vision as the Master's inspiration deepens, whereas this unity is lacking in the Op.132, where, though the *motifs* are separately repeated and developed with inexhaustible device of invention, their original thematic elements remain unaltered in form and scope. This absence of unity is stressed by the addition of an *alternativo* in A major, which appears in the form of an elaborately worked-out [?] *musette* of an unexpected and wholly alien character that breaks the logical sequence of the work. . . . It calls to mind certain rather clumsy rhythms in *menuets* of Haydn symphonies. . . .
>
> —Joseph de Marliave, before 1918, largely copying from Helm.

> A scherzo, in A major, with a pastoral trio—a last echo of some wandering musician's bagpipe—suggests to us once more the still uncertain steps of the convalescent in his first outings.
>
> —Vincent d'Indy, quoted entire from Cobbett's *Cyclopaedia*, 1929, watering down a conceit from Helm.

> It is the ingenious mosaic of a skilful craftsman who for the moment has only his skill to offer as a substitute for zest. The square-cut subject of the first violin is set against the second violin's even more monotonous countersubject . . . you end with the weariness induced by mechanical monotony . . . the trio refreshes us like a walk in the open air after a long bout of calculating sums over a desk.
>
> —Daniel Gregory Mason, 1947.

Old A. B. Marx even had the essential point, though he had it backwards: what Beethoven wanted here, and what he achieved so beautifully, was not another dynamic piece in the sonata style, but a static, architectural composition in the manner of Bach. Why else his experiments with fugue and all kinds of contrapuntal writing? Unlike every other Beethoven movement, this one does not grow from moment to moment; it unfolds, as it

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were suspended in time. An idea is presented in two bars, and the rest is non-dramatic consequence. As Tovey remarked, there is no other movement in Beethoven, certainly not the Fifth Symphony, which uses so little material so thoroughly (and, by the way, so skilfully). Indeed, is there any in Bach?

The terminology "architectural" versus "dramatic" music is Tovey's. To develop it in another way, say that the subject of a fugue, a theme in a sonata-form movement, and the basic idea of this *allegro ma non tanto* all stand in their several ways for some simple emotional current. The fugue and the other forms of the baroque typically treat their theme or themes by repetition and elaboration. Though psychologically artificial, for one emotion is not worried about in such a way, this is no doubt more an advantage than disadvantage to the artist. At best, the constantly varied and beautifully arranged repetitions produce a grand vision of the single emotional theme. At worst they exaggerate the experience perversely; the baroque artist, under the influence of the *Affectenlehre*, believed that the further he pursued an idea the truer it would become—sometimes to our impatience. No impatience accompanies our experience of the Kyrie of the *B minor Mass*, where a subject is developed over an immense structure to create an eternity of grief unapproachable by any individual Christian.

Classical composers, on the other hand, do not mull over a single idea or even a group of ideas. They juxtapose them meaningfully with many others; and simulate with them all a genuine emotional pattern of some length. Such an emotional pattern, five minutes long, is certainly very far stylized, but nevertheless it is this effort that causes the increased psychological complexity of the classical style. And the first movement of Op.132, I am sure, is truer to direct psychological response than almost any other music. The romantic composers aspired to this sort of realism, and clearly they lacked the insight of Mozart, to say nothing of Beethoven. With Beethoven, a total train of experience is followed on some level by the whole movement; and, in the A minor and C-sharp minor Quartets, by the whole composition.

Why did he wish such an oddity (for his age) for the second movement of the Quartet? Apart from his general investigation of this kind of expression, perhaps (1) to reflect the first move-

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ment without contradicting or superseding it, as from a new dimension; to purge it by a static and so infinite vision. Perhaps (2) to illuminate the following *heiliger Dankgesang*, which by contrast stands as a dynamic experience, earthy and intense. It is considered exactly the reverse of this, and so it might be, taken by itself, with its Lydian *adagio* and its ever-suspended six-four chords. But imagine for a moment the two movements turned around, the *Dankgesang* before the *allegro ma non tanto*.

At all events, complete contrast with the first movement is achieved. (The same effect, less strong and the other way about, occurs between the opening fugue and the second movement of the C-sharp minor Quartet.) *I* has an unusually wide variety of heterogeneous material, thrown together in curt contrast, yet artfully justified; *II* uses a single idea drawn out exhaustively. In *I* development procedures are slighted, but in *II* carried further than ever before. *I* is characterized by rhythmic flux; *II* shows a most carefully controlled rhythmic regularity, which only the simplest listener will find monotonous. The memorable harmony of the first movement is chromatic, using conventionally expressive diminished-sevenths, Phrygian cadences, Neapolitan chords, and so on; the harmony in *II* is flat, essentially diatonic. *I*—rich texture; what deafness, that could imagine the colors of the C-sharp minor Quartet variations! *II*—incredibly, the movement is largely in two-part counterpoint (not counting doubling in thirds as extra part-writing). This bears some thinking about. If we say for the sake of metaphor that the strings in the first movement are used like an orchestra, in the second they are used like a piano or a clavier—as with the *Art of Fugue*. *I* is dominated by the grieving minor second descending; *II* not only misses this, but in it analysts might detect its contradiction in the continual sounding of the upward semitone. The first movement is so deeply involved with life that there is something heroic, in the end, in its ever-heightening consciousness and its continuing sanity. The second is so unreal that natural emotional content seems transcended. The first movement is tight, alert, broken; the second diffuse, entranced, entire. Its monumental abstraction is only seen in terms of its juxtaposition to the first movement.

The two simple counterpoints which generate the piece are presented at the start: the bass, four bars of rising sequences

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(2x2) in unison; then the same bass with the treble, which likewise falls into a regular pattern, though it is more pliant in melody and rhythm. Beethoven really borrowed this idea in double-counterpoint—not from Bach, but from Mozart, his most haunting influence among earlier composers.

> *Mozart, Quartet in A, K.464. One of the best and most interesting of his quartets, though probably the least known of the six dedicated to Haydn, unusually serious, deeply impressed by Haydn. The development of the first movement is long and earnest; the* menuetto *has a mood all its own; the third movement is Mozart's greatest set of variations; and the fourth, says Einstein, "leaves the hearer in a very pensive mood." This* finale *is one of the very few pieces by Mozart of which Beethoven is known to have written out a copy, so far as I can discover. No doubt it was made in conjunction with the Op.18 quartets, for Beethoven's A major follows Mozart's, though scarcely matches it, in its long variation movement with coda, and its chorale-like theme in the* finale. *Beethoven did not forget the piece, and now writing his Quartet in A minor (keys are always significant) he looked to Mozart's remarkable little minuet. It is also Mozart's second movement, though modern editions and performances often misplace the slow movement before it.*[1] *It also follows a problematic opening movement which ends abruptly.*

Mozart's treatment is quite different, much more regular from the classical point of view; for him the combination of the two figures is a secondary matter. Yet there is something of Beethoven's spirit in this minuet, something of the distance and refinement of Mozart's latest work: the Clarinet Quintet in A, the *Magic Flute.*

Beethoven works out the double-counterpoint with single-minded persistence. The movement has the perfection of certain pieces by Bach, plus its own elegance and immobility, and the quality of pure intellection. It is apparently not superfluous to stress the skill and subtlety of the motivic development in this piece. An instance: the one bar in the movement with a trochaic

[1] I passed on this unhermetic information to a violist of the Roth Quartet, but it was not acted on for their new recording.

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harmonic rhythm (𝅗𝅥 ♩) comes right before the recapitulation, bar 70. Another instance: a tiny issue of construction was how to fill in the small gaps after the descent of the treble figure (bars 6 and 8); for various solutions, compare 18, 28, 39, 52, 72, 76, 80. The material is treated with inexhaustible imagination, and the rhythm in particular handled with the most refined plasticity.

Even more magical is the effect of the trio. It is an ethereal parody, ten times removed, of the *Deutsche Tänze* which Beethoven and Mozart wrote by the dozen for the Redoutensaal in Vienna. Absolutely no sense of travesty remains; the material is simply used, not commented upon (compare the musicological *parodieren, Parodiemesse*). Again it is a movement which refuses to grow, a random gallimafry of four or five doggerel little tunes, thrown together with as little order as the dances in *Don Giovanni* or the Don's *Tafelmusik*. Indeed this is not merely a parody of the Viennese ballroom style, but of specific compositions: Thayer saw that one of Beethoven's fragments comes from the A major piece in twelve *Deutschen* of 1796-7 (ed. by O. E. Deutsch, 1929), and he might have added as an even closer model a trivial Allemande in A written for piano "around 1800" (*Works*, XXV, 307). See also No. 8 of the 1795 *Deutschen* (*Works*, II, 17), again in A major; keys are always important. But the Quartet is as far from actual dancing, or from any *Gefühle bei der Ankunft auf dem Lande*, as it is from lightheartedness, weariness, joy, humor, or "bacchanalian frenzy". There is the quality of transcendence in the glittering height of the first violin, the piercing thin drone, and the texture at the end as space is filled by vibrant and suddenly powerful sound (Weber, seeing the bare five-octave B-flat that opens the Fourth Symphony, judged Beethoven off his head). Rhythmic monotony is parodied, transformed, with the curious off-beat accents, and the interruption in *alla breve* octaves which recalls so strangely both the introduction-figure of the first movement, and the motive which had there irrationally broken the development at a point of triumph. The *allegro ma non tanto* returns verbatim, and could not return otherwise. One sees that in some way the *allegro* and its trio are doing exactly the same thing, two faces of a coin.

Genesis of such a movement: of the four classical movements,

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it was the minuet that Beethoven modified first, with his *scherzi*, and furthest, with this movement. The *finale*, always troublesome, Beethoven developed least. His minuets and *scherzi* can become heightened parodies of their own genre: the third Rassoumovsky Quartet, Op.59 no.3, has a pin-point parody of a *menuet galant*, and a rude burlesque of a vamping trio. Country-dance parodies are implicit in Haydn from the 1780's; Mozart really avoids them; they grow in Beethoven through that A major Quartet, Op.18 no.5, the Russian music of the Rassoumovsky Quartets, the Archduke Trio, the Sixth, the Ninth; later in the Quartets Op.130, 131, and 135. Op.132 is unsurpassed in intensity and imaginativeness. The next best, I think, is the *alla tedesca* of Op.130, which was apparently first thought of for the A minor Quartet.

III: *Molto adagio—andante. Heiliger Dankgesang eines Genesenen an die Gottheit, in der lydischen Tonart*

Point Counter Point. Huxley's fated libertine is bent on gaudy suicide. He drags healthy Mark and Mary Rampion up to his flat and his new gramophone to confirm a last vision of heaven:

> "I won't bother you with the rest of the quartet. It's lovely. But the *heiliger Dankgesang* is the crucial part." . . . The archaic Lydian harmonies hung on the air. It was an unimpassioned music, transparent, pure, and crystalline, like a tropical sea, an Alpine lake. Water on water, calm sliding over calm; the according of level horizons and waveless expanses, a counterpoint of serenities. And everything clear and bright; no mists, no vague twilights. It was the calm of still and rapturous contemplation, not of drowsiness or sleep. It was the serenity of the convalescent who wakes from fever and finds himself born again into a realm of beauty. But the fever was "the fever called living" and the rebirth was not into this world; the beauty was unearthly, the convalescent serenity was the peace of God . . . (*and later*) It was as though heaven had suddenly and impossibly become more heavenly, had passed from achieved perfection into perfection yet deeper and more absolute. The ineffable peace persisted; but it was no longer the peace of convalescence and passivity. It quivered, it was alive, it seemed to grow and intensify itself, it became an active calm, an almost passionate serenity. The miraculous paradox of eternal life and eternal repose was musically realized.

Isn't this the proof, the only real proof, of God, the soul, good-

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ness? But for smug Rampion it is the art of a man who has lost his body, a hymn in praise of eunuchism.

> "You're quite right. It *is* heaven, it *is* the life of the soul. It's the most perfect spiritual abstraction from reality I've ever known. But why should he have wanted to make that abstraction? Why couldn't he be content to be a man and not an abstract soul? Why, why?" He began walking up and down the room. "This damned soul," he went on, "this damned abstract soul—it's like a kind of cancer, eating up the real, human natural reality, spreading and spreading at its expense. Why can't he be content with reality, your stupid old Beethoven?"

Spandrell gives in, goes out to his assassination.

So do not say that nowadays we are not so sensitive to the power of music as the ancients—as Alexander, who was stirred to warlike fury and then calmed again by the aulos-player Timotheus, as the Boeotians, cured of sciatica by the harmonies of Ismenias the Theban, as Clytaemnestra, whose amorous passions were quieted by the playing of a Doric musician. As I offer no interpretation myself of this so-celebrated movement, I had best not cavil at Huxley's; but Spandrell really should have listened to the whole quartet. More than any previous composition of Beethoven, Op. 132 is a single journey, whose movements are stages and not self-contained solutions. I have already suggested that in the light of the second movement the *Dankgesang* seems paradoxically a return to existence, a vivid experience. And Beethoven did not leave the needle scratching on the disc; in two more movements the spiritual abstraction returns to the most stringent reality.

The Lydian mode. It is neither Greek, Gregorian, nor Palestrinian; it is F major with a raised fourth degree. Beethoven writes on the score: "This piece always has B-natural, never B-flat, as usual." (Keys are always important. Modal experiments in the nineteenth century use the modes in their untransposed, classroom keys: the "Incarnatus" of the *Missa solemnis*, Brahms' Fourth.) It is inconceivable for Beethoven to write non-tonally, so a problem in this movement, and as I hope to show an organic problem, was how to control the Lydian mode in terms of Beethoven's tonality. For the raised fourth, the B-natural, is the most dynamic note in the chord of the "dominant-of-the-dominant", G, the leading-tone into the dominant key, C major. Consequently there is a very strong urge to modulate into the dominant, and on the face of it it is impossible to return to the tonic F without restoring the

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B-flat, which is never done. The tonic sounds like a subdominant; a feeling of inaction results, the antithesis of the progressive, dramatic sound of the dominant. This difficult experiment in tonality was undertaken, I am sure, in order to obtain this curiously remote and transcendent aura.

The *adagio molto* is an unusually simple hymn-like tune, as though melody, rhythm, and accompaniment figuration were all drastically cut down to emphasize the harmonic peculiarity. It has five phrases, each of eight even half-notes ("long meter"; the Old Hundredth). The accompaniment is almost all note-against-note harmony in four or five parts; this was quite a risk. But in the fashion of a chorale-prelude, there is a faster prelude, brief but polyphonic, which recurs to separate the phrases.

> *Ninth Symphony: the parallel is obvious enough. Like the Quartet, the first melody is broken up by fragments on another plane, which are here, however, organic echoes. There is a second tune to contrast with the first, though in the Quartet the contrast is finer: the first section is stiller, and the second richer and better characterized. The form, with its alternating two sections and their variations, is parallel:*
>
> *The Ninth:* A-B-A *var.*-B *var.*-A *var. and a long ending in the style of* A.
>
> *Op. 132:* A-B-A *var.*-B *var.—a long ending in the style of* A—
>
> *and the key system is similar (take into consideration also the first movement). There is moreover a comparable, though significantly different formal dynamic in the two movements. See Tovey's analysis, again. In the Ninth, tune* A *is about to make a regular cadence when a surprising modulation opens up a new region for* B. *This arbitrary stroke gives the movement its essential drama; the end of each statement of* A *or its variations now becomes problematic. The first time it modulates to D major, the second time to G, the third time with an unexpected trumpet call to the subdominant and far beyond—actually the crux of the movement.*

The important fact about the chorale is that harmonically it is not normal, and cannot cadence regularly. So when it modulates

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off at the end of *A* the effect is altogether different from the Ninth; not of surprise, but of inevitability. In the chorale the second phrase already modulates to the dominant, to C major; the fourth phrase, attempting the cadence, finds how impossible it is to return without the normal flattened fourth degree. It is therefore repeated freely to make the fifth phrase, which moves instead logically and satisfactorily into A major. (That is interesting. Did Beethoven know that when sixteenth-century composers wrote in what was for them the equally artificial pure Lydian mode, they too generally worked their final cadences in A?)

The modulation at the end of the chorale does not impart the energy inserted by the artificial deflection at the analogous place in the Ninth. Everything here is static, compared to even the most peaceful movement of the gigantic Symphony. After the first variation in the Quartet, the identical modulation occurs. The *Neue Kraft* (section *B*) comes in the same tonality, as inevitable as before.

But how to end the movement? this is the crisis here, analogous to the dramatic third ending of *A* in the Ninth, with its trumpet call. Beethoven does the impossible, he does what he has twice shown to be impossible: he makes his cadence in F, without changing his tortuous scale. It takes many minutes; unlike the Ninth, there is no third appearance of the whole tune *A*, only development of it in the freest fashion. It is this *tour de force* that gives the incredible intensity of this final section, the "passionate serenity" to which Huxley refers.

Harmony and cadence. Just how this is managed cannot be seen without a full analysis of the new harmonic resources that Beethoven was beginning to utilize in this work, in the *adagio* of the Ninth, and in all other works before his death. Late Beethoven is apart from, above, ahead of the main line of development from classical harmony to the romantic harmony of Schubert, Chopin, Wagner and beyond. His chromatic harmony, in the first and last movements, is frankly conventional, as I have suggested before, comprehensible (which is not to say congenial) to Mozart or Bach. In face of historical progress which he may perhaps be forgiven for not recognizing, Beethoven's radical advance was in plain diatonic harmony; there are passages in the *Dankgesang* which would have mystified those earlier masters.

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(For instance, that very delicately poised B-natural; it is most frequently heard as part of the "dominant-of-the-dominant", the dominant-seventh of C, but the root (G) is so often missing, and the doubling is such, that the faintly banal sound of the leading-tone is transformed. Altogether unorthodox is Beethoven's spacing (bar 109), his doubling (202), his appoggiaturas and suspensions (171, 203), his use of weak harmonic rhythm (171, even 3), his affection for that *pons asinorum* the six-four chord (*passim*), and especially his systematic syncopation of the bass. To say that these anomalies result from increased linear interest is true, but does not get us far. Evident in the opening statement of the chorale, they occur with carefully mounting power through the first variation, with its lithe 'cello obbligato, and the more polyphonic final section marked *Mit innigster Empfindung*.)

This much at least can be said about this final section, and its critical establishment of the Lydian tonic, F major. Beethoven dares not use the second phrase of the chorale, the one which had modulated into the dominant; he develops throughout only the first phrase, together of course with a beautifully flexible version of his original contrapuntal prelude and interlude figure. But now the first phrase of the chorale is also used polyphonically, indeed in a kind of canon, which Beethoven knew to be a profoundly anti-tonal device. This section is in three parts. First, the phrase is played several times in a stern, jagged canon starting from F and from C: F-F-E-D-E; C-C-B-A-B-C. The B-natural automatically brings on a modulation, which is guided towards a modal degree, D minor. A solemn full halt; then (and this perhaps is important) *the same beginning* in F without a modulation back, as though unaware, unperturbed by the ostensibly firm D minor. This canon, from C and F again, is thorough, stark, less concerned with niceties of harmonic compliance—how exquisite is the figure G-F-C on the first violin. Now the modulation moves slowly, with heartbreaking beauty to the dominant, C major; but once again there follows *the same beginning*, F major with its serene subdominant sound simply interrupting C major. Is it the quiet clear recollection of the previous two starts that brings conviction that the equivocation is lifting now? For F major takes root; this time the canon starts only from F, so there is no direct pull away: F-E-D-C; F-E-D-C; F-E-D-E-F. The modifications to the simple half-notes of the chorale, which were rigorously kept

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till now, bear no description. And on this high F the music ends, with threadlike reiterations on the highest strings. Beethoven achieves the eternity of a static, non-tonal world without sacrificing the subtlety and contrast of his own harmonic system.

Neue Kraft fühlend. Contrast with the chorale analogous to that of the trio with the main body of the second movement. It is of course entirely tonal, rejoicing in the two basic chords denied to the Lydian *Dankgesang:* the subdominant and the dominant-seventh. Indeed besides these chords and the tonic it uses hardly anything else; the harmonic structure is surprisingly elementary; it could not have been easy to write such a long passage and such an exquisite one with so little recourse to the so-called "modal degrees", the supertonic, mediant, and submediant. Unlike the corresponding passage in the Ninth Symphony, this does not consist of a single tune but of three fragments, each repeated. The "dominant-of-the-dominant" was especially crucial in the chorale; now the cadences to each fragment, and the threefold cadence to the last of them, take care to use this chord normally, unequivocally, exultantly. It is the most sensuously beautiful section of the Quartet, unforgettable.

Scoring and tempo. One only has to imagine the *adagio* parts played by a string orchestra to realize how unidiomatically they are scored for string quartet. How much better they would sound in orchestra than the *lento* of Op. 135! There is no doubt that this somewhat precarious effect, and of course the contrast with the *Neue Kraft,* was deliberately sought by Beethoven. But in performance the effect is often too tenuous, because players take the chorale too slowly, and moreover slow down the final section. A listener quoted by Mason says that the movement reminds him of "trying to ride a bicycle as slowly as you can without falling off", and Huxley may not be free of this uncomfortable misconception, if Spandrell's recording was that of the old Lener Quartet. However slow the *Dankgesang* goes, there is no reason why the final section should be appreciably slower; it only tends to lose its sense of interrelation and coherence.[2]

[2]On the basis of Beethoven's metronome mark for the Ninth, Kolisch suggests the tempo ♩=30 for the *Dankgesang,* two seconds for each note of the chorale, faster than we are likely to hear it. The recording by the Budapest Quartet uses about ♩=22 for the first section, and slows to about ♩=17 for the last. The new recording by the Griller Quartet holds to one tempo, more or less, but it is slow: about ♩=19.

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IV. *Alla marcia, assai vivace*

Careful release is necessary after the slow movement; a great, quiet climax of intensity has been established at the final cadential chords. Beethoven's plan was surely to retain the four-movement form of the usual quartet, perhaps with an introduction to the finale as in Op. 95, but this plan had to break down here. He leaves the *heiliger Dankgesang* as he had approached it, by another abstract, parodistic, dance-like movement, this time an *alla marcia* in four-four time (not three-time). Thus he makes use of both classical positions for the minuet: as an interlude after the opening movement, and also after the slow movement.

Compared to the second movement and its silvery trio, the *alla marcia* is less intellectual, less ideal, less inflected, much shorter, blanker. This is because it is leading to a fifth movement in which there is to be a deliberate lowering of what I might call the tension of insight. And also because a relaxation of concentration is really necessary after the ethereal conclusion of the *Dankgesang*. (This view of the movement seems to me truer than the usual talk of its return to reality or of its valiant if pathetic gesture. The return comes with a rather rude effect in a moment. Counterpoint this with Sullivan's view, p. 246).

Like the second movement, the march is in its small way perfect, exquisitely tooled. It is a joy to turn it over in the mind, like a fragile ensemble from *Cosi fan tutte*, or a deal from *Jeu de Cartes*. Significantly it runs its whole course, with repeats, before the recitative breaks in; it will not be spoiled. This recitative plunges us abruptly into brooding experience; while its expression is not more profound than that of the first movement, it makes a greater outward effect on account of a certain rawness in the presentation. The artistic process here operates less deeply upon experience than in the first movement; compare the recitative-like passages there, which are plainly echoed. Although this might have been accomplished to aesthetic perfection, and although I certainly see why it needs to be done, I venture the suggestion that this recitative may be Beethoven's one miscalculation in the Quartet. It somehow fails to convince; it is too immediate (not too sudden), not fully enough realized musically. The recitatives in the Ninth and in the last quartet, Op. 135, are actually more

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successful, perhaps because they essay a kind of mystic or universal utterance, rather than the "pure subjectivity" of Op. 132. Adrian Leverkühn, that connoisseur of subjectivity, parodies this recitative in his slightly meretricious concerto for Rudi Schwerdtfeger.

V: *Allegro appassionato*

Adrian Leverkühn, now parodying Thomas Mann, protests that it is impossible to characterize the mood of this movement in words, and that after all the best description is Beethoven's *allegro appassionato.* It is strange that he should say so about this particular movement, which is relatively direct from the psychological point of view, at least as long as it remains *allegro appassionato.* Surely it is simpler than any one of the other movements of the Quartet, or than the Sonata in C, Op.111, which is dissected and pinned on to file cards by the stutterer Wendell Kretschmar (parodying Thomas Mann). The lowering of complexity in this famous *finale,* the release of the tension of insight, seems to me an important point in the understanding of the Quartet (the concluding *presto,* once again, is something else). The corresponding exposure to experience rounds out the work, complicates and vindicates the total journey, and mocks Mark Rampion's complaint.

The movement is a rondo, which is ordinarily a more or less unsubtle and *galant* form, good for concertos. There are few rondos in Beethoven's late work; few really profound rondos in any of his work; few serious rondos in the minor mode in the whole classical repertory (there is one in an intense early sonata by Mozart—in A minor). Moreover, the treatment of the rondo principle in Op.132 is peculiar and possibly unique. A rondo is supposed to contrast a memorable tune with several other ideas, so that a pleasant effect is achieved by the returns of the first melody: *A B A C A B A coda,* or some such scheme. But in Op.132 the effect is not pleasant but obsessive, because the interludes *B* and *C* are reduced to nothing. Not only do they exclude independent rounded melodies, such as rondos traditionally have, but they are so undefined in character that one can only wait for the powerful first theme to return. And its first two recurrences, instead of being prepared with a sense of inevitability, as with Mozart, or of humor, as with Haydn, or of drama, as usual with

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Beethoven, are arranged pathetically; the music slips innocuously back into the first tune as though unable to carry itself any further without it. The novel use of rondo form gives the movement its special character, and of course makes the much admired first (and only) tune all the more important. It can stand all the weight put upon it.

> "Quartett serioso" *in F minor, Op.95: written fifteen years earlier, in 1810, the* finale *is almost like a sketch for Op.132. Similarities: for the downward semitone of Op.132, here there is a recurrent upward second; the interludes to the rondo (which is* serioso, minore*) are reduced drastically in importance, if not as fully as in Op. 132; the movement ends with a fast new section in the major mode, like Op.132. Among the differences: the central theme is poorer; the expression of suffering is cruder; the effect of the major ending is less fine—it is approached in a formal way which already foreshadows release (compare the frantic passage in Op.132), and caps the Quartet in a burst of speed which is not entirely humorous but not entirely serious either. The same experience is reconsidered, marvellously transfigured in Op.132.*

The first episode to the rondo *(B)* uses cross-rhythms recalling the trio to the second movement, but now with a sense of anxiety and power. The second *(C)* is a brief development in some ways like that of the first movement. It is in two climactic surges, of which the first resolves into a rather fantastic passage—essentially new, though not as surprising as that of the first movement. The second surge is broader and more successful than in the first movement, but like it ends equivocally, in an attempted subdominant (D minor) recapitulation, which fails lifelessly until the tonic is restored. This also parallels the transition from the recitative (centrally in D minor) into the beginning of the rondo (A minor); the effect in each case is to give especial energy to the theme (which was wise at the beginning; after the A major march, A minor could only have sounded anti-climactic).[3] The developmental climaxes in the episode *C* are refined versions of the passages of dumb eruption famous from the Third and Fifth Symphonies.

[3] I can imagine an ingenious analysis of this Quartet all in terms of equivocal dominants.

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Perhaps because in this movement there is a reduction in the tension of consciousnes of the rest of the Quartet, Beethoven would not end with its mood of obsession coupled with strength, restlessness, heroism, and bitterness. The shadowy figures at the end of the third episode *(B)* build up with suddenly astonishing frenzy. This *crescendo ed accelerando* lasts but a few seconds, but its effect is almost unbearable; the only thing that can possibly ensue is the obsessive first theme. There is something very terrible about playing a moderately-paced theme in a wild *presto*, especially when its rhythmic accompaniment, heretofore so subtly articulated, is reduced to beatings in the middle instruments. The elegantly-fashioned melody is made to rear up to its final peak, but instead of falling to its affirmative cadence it stays caught on the high E, at its moment of highest expression; and *dissolves* into the major mode and quiet. It is one of the most moving places in music, I think. One recalls and contrasts Schubert's major mode for the connotations of death, in *Der Zwerg, Der Tod und das Mädchen, Nachtstück, Der Müller und das Bach*, and who knows how many instrumental pieces.

This dissolution brings us back to the transcendent awareness of the early movements. A major is the key of the parody dance and the parody march. Those (not Tovey) who hear exuberance and rejoicing in this passage have no ears for the strain of the 'cello high over the throbbing viola, the harping F-naturals, the C-natural at the end, and the accumulating descending seconds. These the rondo has salvaged from the opening movement. In the preliminary recitative, the interval is reconstructed in a burst of passion, a ninth contracted to a second; it then forms a driving accompaniment to the main tune, is developed in both episodes, and is distilled and assimilated in the *presto*. Why does Beethoven practically quote the Mozart A major Quartet here (bars 328-31, etc; Mozart, 1st movement, 246-9)? It is a journey-ending to characterize only in musical analogies; Mozart's Berlin Quartets with their *violoncello concertante*—but, in fact, impossible to characterize.

*

The critical task consists in spiraling just such impossibilities.

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Everything else is preparatory. Those who do not share a rather common defeatism on this score would instead say that a whole set of radical techniques and new stratagems is badly needed. While seeking them there is no reason to slight technical analysis, which is the one prop we have, however dry and one-sided it seems alone. But it is not necessary to issue a call for analysis, only to fight for its improvement; it is widely practised and disputed, though not always intelligently. One trouble today is over-analysis, analysis removed from any reality but that of its own assumptions. On a quite different level, a trouble with analysis is that there is no trained (or should I say, subdued) lay audience prepared to follow it.

This hardship, at least, would not be met by essays in the comprehension of music from the standpoint of its mode of imitation of experience. But here the lack of even suggestions for methods —grown-up methods—is striking. You see it in these notes to the Quartet. You see it in Sullivan's book, which is remarkable not only in being the first reasonable attempt of its kind, and so right as far as it goes, but also for the narrowness of his vision, the inchoate form in which he is content to leave his ideas, and the timidity with which he separates off his approach from that of analysis. It is this lack in the equipment of Helm and Mason and the insufferable d'Indy that makes their criticism in the last analysis so childish.

Only the groundwork may be learned from aestheticians, for characteristically they leave off just where critics wish to begin. Fresh imagination is required, and a new articulation, and perhaps some inspired filching from non-musical critical traditions. Of course there is plenty to be done, in very many areas, without such radical techniques; but without them only a tentative approach can be made to the mature music of Beethoven.

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HORACE

Liber I, Carmen XXV

Parcius iunctas quatiunt fenestras
Iactibus crebris iuvenes protervi,
Nec tibi somnos adimunt, amatque
    Ianua limen,
Quae prius multum facilis movebat
Cardines; audis minus et minus iam
'Me tuo longas pereunte noctes,
    Lydia, dormis?'
Invicem moechos anus arrogantis
Flebis in solo levis angiportu,
Thracio bacchante magis sub inter-
    lunia vento,
Cum tibi flagrans amor et libido
Quae solet matres furiare equorum
Saeviet circa iecur ulcerosum,
    Non sine questu
Laeta quod pubes hedera virenti
Gaudeat pulla magis atque myrto,
Aridas frondes hiemis sodali
    Dedicet Hebro.

CATULLUS

Carmen CI

Multas per gentes et multa per aequora vectus
    Advenio has miseras, frater, ad inferias,
Ut te postremo donarem munere mortis
    Et mutam nequiquam adloquerer cinerem,
Quandoquidem fortuna mihi tete abstulit ipsum,
    Heu miser indigne frater adempte mihi.
Nunc tamen interea haec, prisco quae more parentum
    Tradita sunt tristi munere ad inferias,
Accipe fraterno multum manantia fletu
    Atque in perpetuum, frater, ave atque vale.

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translations by
ROBERT FITZGERALD

Horace I, 25

The young men come less often—isn't it so?—
To rap at midnight on your fastened window;
Much less often. How do you sleep these days?

There was a time your door gave with proficiency
On easy hinges; now it seems apter at being shut.
I do not think you hear many lovers moaning

"Lydia, how can you sleep?
"Lydia, the night is so long!
"Oh, Lydia, I'm dying for you!"

No. The time is coming when *you* will moan
And cry to scornful men from an alley corner
In the dark of the moon when the wind's in a passion

With lust that would drive a mare wild
Raging in your ulcerous old viscera.
You'll be alone and burning then

To think how happy boys take their delight
In the new tender buds, the blush of myrtle,
Consigning dry leaves to the winter sea.

Catullus, CI

By strangers' coasts and waters, many days at sea,
I came here for the rites of your unworlding,
Bringing for you, the dead, these last gifts of the living
And my words—vain sounds for the man of dust.
Alas, my brother,
You have been taken from me. You have been taken from me,
By cold Chance turned a shadow, and my pain.
Here are the foods of the old ceremony, appointed
Long ago for the starvelings under earth:
Take them; your brother's tears have made them wet; and take
Into eternity my hail and my farewell.

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PAUL BLACKBURN

Three Provencal Poets

GUILLEM DE PEITAU

(1071-1127)

VIDA

The Count of Poitou was certainly one of the greatest courtiers in the world, and had his way with women: and a good knight-at-arms and open-handed in courting. And he knew well to sing and well trobar; *and he went for a long time through the world with the sole purpose of deceiving women. And he had a son who had to wife the Duchess of Normandy by whom he (the son) had a daughter (Eleanor) whom he married to Henry King of England, mother of the young king and the lord Richard (Coeur de Lion) and of the Count Geoffrey of Brittany.*

VERS

Companho, faray un vers . . . convinen:
Et aura·i mais de foudaz no·y a de sen,
Et er totz mesclatz d'amor e de joy e de joven.

E tenguatz lo per vilan qui no l'enten
O dins son cor voluntiers (qui) non l'apren,
Greu partir si fa d'amor qui la trob'a son talen.

Dos cavalhs ai a ma selha ben e gen;
Bon son e adreg per armas e valen;
Mas no ls puesc amdos tener que l'us l'autre non cossen.

Si·ls pogues adomesjar a mon talen,
Ja no volgra alhors mudar mon guarnimen,
Que miels for' encavalguatz de nuill (autr') ome viven.

Laüns fo dels montanhiers lo plus corren;
Mas aitan fer estranhez' ha longuamen,
Et es tan fers e salvatges que del bailar si defen.

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L'autre fo noyritz sa jus part Cofolen,
Et anc no·n vis bellazor mon escien;
Aquest non er ja camjatz ni per aur ni per argen.

Que'ie·l doney a son senhor polin payssen;
Pero si·m retinc ieu tan de covenen
Que s'el lo teni' un an qu'ieu lo tengues mais de cen.

Cavallier, datz mi cosselh d'un pessamen!
Anc mais no fuy issarratz de cauzimen:
Ges non sai ab qual mi tengua de N'Agnes o de N'Arsen.

De Gimel ai lo castel el mandamen,
E per Niol fauc ergueil a tota gen,
C'ambedui me son jurat e plevit per sagramen.

VERS

Friend, I would make verses . . . that's understood,
But I witless, and they most mad and all
Mixed up, *mesclatz*, jumbled from youth and love and joy—

And if the vulgar do not listen to them?
Learn 'em by heart? He takes a hard
Parting from men's love who composes to his own liking.

Two horses have I to my saddle, sleek,
Game: but husband both for battle? I have
Not the skill, for neither will allow the other.

But could I fasten them both to serve my rein
I would not change cavalage with any other,
For then would I be better mounted than any man living.

The first is of mountain stock, the swifter running;
Sure-footed, well-composed she treads, but wild,
Shy, fierce, so savage she forbids currying. The other

Was nourished up and bred past Cofolens
And I have seen none more beautiful to my knowing,
No, nor would exchange her, not for gold or silver.

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I gave her to her lord a grazing colt,
Yet, by the saints, so well have I retained her
At a sign her bridle would she rive asunder to come to me.

Lord, in this difficulty counsel me!
Never was I more harassed in a choice.
Agnes or Arsen! Madness or death will take me first.

At Gimel have I a castle under domain,
At Nieul have I pride before men; for both
These *nonpareils* are sworn to me, and pledged by oath.

RAIMBAUTZ DE VAQUEIRAS

(c. 1155-1205)

VIDA

Raimbaut de Vacheiras was the son of a poor knight of Provence, of the castle of Vacheiras, who had the name of Peirops and was taken for crazy. Sir Raimbautz was made a jongleur and stayed a long time with the prince d'Aurenga. And he made great favor for him and great honor and advanced him and made him known before people of quality. And then he went to Monferrat *à Miser to the Marquis Bonifaci I. And he stayed in this court a long time, and flourished in wit and raiment, and in* trobar. *And he fell in love with the sister of the Marquis who was called Milady Biatritz and who was the wife of Henri del Carret. And he made for her many good* cansos, *and called her in his* cansos *"My lovely Cavalliers". And it was believed that she wished great favor upon him through love. And then the Marquis went into Romagna and took Raimbaut with him. He made him a knight and gave him great land and a good income and the government of Salonika. And at that place he died.*

ALBA

Gaita ben, gaiteta del chastel,
Quan la ren que plus m'es bon e bel

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Ai a mi tro squa l'albe.
E·l jorns ven e no·n l'apel.
Joc novel
Mi tol l'albe, l'albe, oc l'albe.

Gait'amics, e veilhe e crida "bray"
Qu'eu sui ricx e so qu'eu plus voilh ai,
Mays enics sui de l'albe,
E·l destrics que·l jorn nos fai
Mi desplai
Plus que l'albe, l'albe, oc l'albe.

Gaitaz vos, gaiteta de la tor,
Del gelos vostra malvays seynor,
Enujos plus que l'albe,
Quez a jos parlam d'amor.
Mas paor
Nos fai l'albe, l'albe, oc l'albe.

Domn'adeu! que non puis mais estar;
Malgrat meu, me·n coven ad annar;
Mais tan greu m'es de l'albe
Que tan leu la vei levar.
Enganar
Nos vol l'albe, l'albe, oc l'albe.

ALBA

Guard us well, my sentry,
Cold the pike and heavy
While your radiant mistress, she
Most superb, most lovely,
I have to lie thus close to me 'til dawn.
Command the night stand to,
Bid or forbid as I will, day
Puts out my joy
l'albe, oc l'albe.

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'Til the auzel wakens,
Watchman guard this richness;
'Til the morningstar rises
Eastward, I am wantless.
Enemy am I of that gravesman, dawn:
But a long day forces
All candor from our eyes,
Wholly destroys us
l'albe, oc l'albe.

Cry the hour from the keep, friend;
Keep us here below you from
Your ill-favoured master, warm,
Snug, snoring, cozened, Christ!
Flat on his back, symmetrical, 'til dawn.
Be warder on his treasure
That I may count her over
And only fear
l'albe, oc l'albe.

Love, adieu, adieu!
Longer I could not stay
Beyond our kinsman night, who flies
Before the sun's uprising.
How soggy red these fields lie in the dawn.
And changing his routine watch, unbuckling
Massive keys, my sentry
Cries from the tower
—l'albe, oc l'albe!—

PEIRE VIDAL

(c. 1175-1205)

from the VIDA

. . . And he was in love with milady Alazeis de Roca Martina, who was the wife of En Barrals, lord of Marseilles, he who loved Peire Vidal above any man in the world for his rich trobar *and for the fine follies which he spoke and made. And Peire Vidal*

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was closer to the court and chamber of En Barrals than any man in the world. En Barrals well knew that Peire Vidal was in love with his wife, and held him there out of kindness and gave him whatever he asked for and enjoyed himself with the foolishness that Vidal did and said; and the lady considered his love a big joke. . . . And when Peire Vidal grew angry with her, En Barrals immediately made peace and promised him all he asked for.

And then came a day Peire Vidal knew that En Barrals had risen early, and that the lady was alone in her room; and he went in to the bed of milady Alazeis and found her sleeping, and kneeling before her, kissed her on the mouth. She felt the kiss and believed it was En Barrals and rose laughing; she took one look and saw it was the mad Peire Vidal and raised a great noise and clamor. And the ladies came from within when they heard it and asked "What is this?" And Peire Vidal fled.

And the lady sent for En Barrals and made great complaint of Peire Vidal that he had kissed her, and wept and begged her husband to take vengeance. En Barrals, like the noble and sophisticated person he was, took her then and comforted her and began to laugh and chide his wife that she had made such a clamor over the fool's deed. But he could not chastize her for it, for she might make a really great noise over that. So he sought out and questioned Peire Vidal's bad intent and made him great threats. At which point Peire Vidal boarded a ship for Genoa out of fear; and he stayed at Genoa until he went over the sea [to Palestine] *with King Richart, for he was set in the fear that milady Alazeis wished him to carry her off. And he stayed there for a long time and made many good* cansos [including the one translated here] *recalling the kiss which he had stolen; and he speaks of it in the* canso *"Ajostar e lassar. . ." that from her he had not the slightest reward,*

But a small silk cord
So I had, for one morn
I entered her house and
Kissed her like a thief
On the chin and mouth.

And in another place he says:

More honored would I have been than any man born
Had that stolen kiss been granted me
And given nicely.

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He stayed a long time over the sea, for he dared not return to Provence. But En Barrals, who wished him much good will as he had heard, begged his wife so much that she pardon him the affair of the kiss, that she granted it there out of graciousness. En Barrals sent to Peire Vidal the favor and goodwill of his wife, and wrote he should come. And he came with great happiness to Marseilles, and was welcomed warmly by En Barrals and Madonna Alazeis, and she granted him the kiss out of graciousness which he had stolen from her; of which Peire Vidal made the canso *which goes: "Pos tornatz soi en Proensa", "Since I have returned to Provence. . . ."*

CANSO

Ab l'alen tir vas me l'aire
Qu'eu sen venir de Proensa;
Tot quant es de lai m'agensa,
Si que, quan n'aug ben retraire,
Eu m'o escout en rizen
E·n deman per un mot cen:
Tan m'es bel quan n'aug ben dire.

Qu'om no sap tan dous repaire
Com de Rozer tro qu'a Vensa,
Si com clau mars e Durensa,
Ni on tan fis jois s'esclaire.
Per qu'entre la franca gen
Ai laissat mon cor jauzen
Ab leis que fa·ls iratz rire.

Qu'om no pot lo jorn mal traire
Qu'aja de leis sovinensa,
Qu'en leis nais jois e comensa.
E qui qu'en sia lauzaire,
De ben qu'en diga no·i men;
Que·l melher es ses conten
E·l genser qu'el mon se mire.

E s'eu sai ren dir ni faire,
Ilh n'aja·l grat que sciensa

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M'a donat e conoissensa,
Per qu'eu sui gais e chantaire.
E tot quan fauc d'avinen
Ai del seu bel cors plazen,
Neis quan de bon cor consire.

CANSO

I suck deep in air come from Provence to here:
All things from there so please me, when I hear
In dockside taverns traveler's gossip told,
I listen smiling,
And for each word ask a hundred smiling words—
all news is good

For no man knows so sweet a country as
from the Rhône down to Vence.
If only I were locked between
Durance and the sea:
Such pure joy shines with the sun there.
I left my heart-for-rejoicing
there among noble people,
And with her who bids my sadness dance.

No man can ever pass a day in boredom
who has remembrance of her,
For in her is the beginning and birth of all joy.
And he who would praise her,
No matter how well he speak of her, he lies;
For the world shall not look on one
better or fairer.

And if there is aught I know to say or do,
I merit no praise from it,
For in her is all Good; and through
Her have I wit and knowledge of fulfilment;
Hence I am both a poet and happy,
And all I make which has in it any fineness
I have from the rich delight of her fine body
Even as my heart longs for her in straightness.

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Four Portuguese Poets

PERO MEOGO (*13th Century*)

—Tal vai o meu amigo
con amor que lh'eu dei,
come cervo ferido
de monteiro d'el-rei.

Tal vai o meu amigo,
madre, con meu amor,
come cervo ferido
de monteiro maior.

E, se el vai ferido,
irá morrer al mar.
Si fará meu amigo,
Se eu d'el non pensar.

—E guardade-vos, filha,
cá já un atal vi,
que se fez [mui] coitado,
por guaanhar de mi.

E quardade-vos, filha,
ca já um vi atal,
que se fez mui coitado
por de min guaanhar.

FRANCISCO DE SA DE MIRANDA (*1481-1558*)

Cerra a serpente os ouvidos
à voz do encantador;
en não, e agora com dor
quero perder meus sentidos;
os que mais sabem do mar
fogem d'ouvir as sereas.
Eu não me soube guardar;
fui vos ouvir nomear:
fiz minh' alma e vida alheas.

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translations by
W. S. MERWIN

1.

He goes, my lover,
With the love I have given,
Like a wounded deer
Before the king's huntsman.

He goes, my lover,
With my love, mother,
Like a wounded deer
Before the tall hunter.

Down to the sea he will go
And die of his wound;
That way will my lover go
If I let him leave my mind.

—Have a care, daughter;
There was one such, lately,
Who showed great desire
For the favor of me.

And have a care, daughter;
I knew such another
Once, who showed great desire
Only for my favor.

2.

At the voice of the enchanter
Even the serpent shuts his ear:
Lo, I who listened would that sense
Deranged with grief might disappear.
Those most chary of the sea
Flee the singing of the siren;
Not strength restrained nor policy
When your voice invading me
Struck soul and senses alien.

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JOAN DE GUILHADE (*13th Century*)

Amigos, non poss' eu negar
a gran coita que d'amor ei,
ca me veio sandeu andar,
e con sandeçe o direi:
os olhos uerdes que eu ui
me fazen or' andar assi.

Pero quemquer x'entenderá
aquestes olhos quaes son,
e d'est' alguen se queixará,
mais eu, iá quer moira, quer nõ:
os olhos uerdes que eu ui
me fazen or' andar assi.

Pero non deui' a perder
ome que iá o son nõ á
de con sandeçe ren dizer,
e con sandeçe digu' eu iá:
os olhos uerdes que eu ui
me fazen or' andar assi.

NUNO FERNANDES TORNEOL (*13th Century*): *ALBA*

Levade, amigo, que dormides as manhanas frias
—toda-las aves do mundo d'amor dizian.
Leda m'ando eu.

Levade, amigo, que dormide-las frias manhanas
—toda-las aves do mundo d'amor cantavan.
Leda m'ando eu.

Todalas aves do mundo d'amor dizian;
do meu amor e do vosso en mente avian.
Leda m'ando eu.

Todalas aves do mundo d'amor cantavam,
do meu amor e do vosso i enmentavam.
Leda m'ando eu.

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3.

Friends, I cannot deny
Love wears me grievously,
For I walk sorrowfully
And sorrowfully I say:
  Those green eyes I have seen
  Changed me in this fashion.

He that lends ear may learn
Whose eyes draw my lament;
And he may make complaint;
This, live I or die, is mine:
  Those green eyes I have seen
  Changed me in this fashion.

But no man should betray
His senses' weakening
By sorrow in his speaking,
And I say sorrowfully:
  Those green eyes I have seen
  Changed me in this fashion.

4. *Alba*

Waken, my love, who sleep in the cold morning,
—all the birds in the world, of love were speaking.
  Merrily walk I.

Waken, my love, in the cold morning sleeping,
—all the birds in the world, of love were singing.
  Merrily walk I.

All the birds in the world, of love were speaking,
Thinking upon our love, on our love thinking.
  Merrily walk I.

All the birds in the world, of love were singing,
Remembering our love, remembering.
  Merrily walk I.

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Do meu amor e do vosso en mente avian.
Vós lhi tolhestes os ramos en que siian.
Leda m'ando eu.

Do meu amor e do vosso i enmentavan.
Vos lhi tolhestes os ramos en que pousavan.
Leda m'ando eu.

Vós lhi tolhestes os ramos en que siian
e lhi secastes as fontes en que bevian.
Leda m'ando eu.

Vós lhi tolhestes os ramos en que pousavan
e lhi secastes as fontes u se banhavan.
Leda m'ando eu.

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Thinking upon our love, on our love thinking.
But you have hushed the boughs where they were swinging.
Merrily walk I.

Remembering our love, remembering.
But you have hushed the boughs where they were sitting.
Merrily walk I.

But you have hushed the boughs where they were swinging
And you have dried the springs where they were drinking.
Merrily walk I.

But you have hushed the boughs where they were sitting
And you have dried the springs where they were bathing.
Merrily walk I.

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GEORGE P. ELLIOTT

Faq'

DURING THE WAR MY GEOGRAPHER was a lieutenant in the Air Corps. On one of his trips to North Africa his plane flew over the lower edge of the Atlas Mountains, where they meet the Sahara. For long stretches the range was a desolation, as he had expected, relieved only by a few ribbons of green. No doubt rivers from melting snows came down these valleys and squandered themselves in the desert, supplying just enough water to keep a strip of trees and grasses alive on their banks. All this was what he had learned in his studies. But he had also been taught that no one lived on the south side of the mountains, and yet he was quite certain that in one of the valleys he had seen a cluster of huts and some smoke weaving up through the trees. The smoke could have been mist—though it was a hot clear day—but the huts were certainly human dwellings. His curiosity was aroused. He resolved to satisfy it as soon as he was able.

After the war, when he was able to investigate, he discovered only two references to anything that could possibly be identified as his special valley. The first was in a book written in 1837 by one Sir Benjamin Huntley—"Exploring the Atlas Mountains". Huntley mentions hearing of the existence of a village somewhere south of Mount Tizi, but he says he doubts if his informants were reliable. The other reference was in a twelfth century Arabic manuscript now in the Royal Library in Madrid. On this manuscript a spot considerably south and west of Mount Tizi is identified as *Faq'*. There is nothing in the text to explain Faq'—he found the map in a report on revenues from slave-trading in Spain and Northwest Africa—; there was nothing but the word itself on the old parchment map. There was nothing else at all anywhere. What was he to do?

If he sought the assistance of one of the learned societies, he would certainly lose much or all of the credit for the discovery—if discovery there was to be. But the expenses would probably come to more than his purse could bear, unless he risked making the explorations quite alone and with no further reconnaissance

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by air. And it was a risk—the region was a true wilderness, mountainous, arid, huge, and inhospitable even to plants. But he was young and a good mountaineer and he could speak Arabic, and for years he had been risking his life for a lesser cause (to him) than this. His is the sort that wants every place to be given its right name; for him the words Terra Incognita signify an admission of defeat or a region of impenetrable cold; error is his evil. It was clear what he must do: discover Faq'.

I will not tell you much about the adventures he had before he reached his goal—the delays caused by the suspicion and incredulity of small officials, the hostility of the hill-people, the grandeur of that wilderness in which he wandered for weeks not even sure of the existence of his goal, the privation and fatigue and load of bad doubt which only his pride could support, the great good fortune by which he was saved from starvation by a wounded eagle dropping from the skies near to him—too weak to kill it outright, he had to suck its blood. But finally he stood at the brink of a fertile valley—a valley flat and broad for these mountains, but inaccessible from above because of the sheer rise of the range and from the sides because of the steep cliffs and, as he found, uninviting from below because it narrowed to a gorge that emptied the river out precipitously; but people lived here: it was Faq'. It took him three days to discover the tortuous route of access into the valley, and one whole day to get to the floor. Among rushes at the edge of the river he collapsed, one hand trailing in the water, flat on his belly, sunk at last into that weariness which his pride no longer needed to deny. He lay there for at least one day and perhaps two, he has no way of knowing. When he awoke he could scarcely roll over, and the hand which had fallen into the water was wrinkled white and seemed to be paralyzed. It was lucky for him that he was not discovered, for the women of Faq' would have killed him if they had found him asleep.

He finally rolled onto his back, and lay wondering whether he would ever be able to get up. But as he lay there in the soft rushes in the warmth of afternoon, he began to notice, as though for the first time, that vast clean sky under which he had so long labored; and in his fatigue he could not resist the sudden fancy that the sky was not *over* him— he was not *below* its perfection, but rather

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he was a part of it. "For is not the blueness of the sky," he said to himself, "achieved only by the refraction of light on innumerable particles, which are about me here as well as out there, and maybe in me for all I know?" The longer he lay, looking not up but out, into, among,—the more it seemed to him that the sky was not so absolute a blue as it had been on the days before. Yet there could be no mist, not here on this side of these mountains. He lay wondering whether so much blandness had deceived his senses, but he was swimming in that perfection all the same; and then suddenly an explanation for the seeming mistiness occurred to him. It was a light smoke-haze. He remembered the curls of smoke he had seen from the airplane, and he observed that there was no wind at all. No doubt a nearly imperceptible film of smoke obscured his perfect vision. This saddened him for a moment, but then he thought, "Why is it not as absolute a perfection, the sky with this faint and even haze in it, as a clean sky? These smoke particles have been added, but thinly like the blue particles, perfectly distributed. They are not an adulteration but a version of that other perfection, a part of it, distributed differently now than before; if it hadn't been for that tiny difference I would never have noticed the whole, huge sublimity, and who can say that one of these versions is truer than the other?" Full of these reflections he arose, and went down the riverside in search of friends.

He had not gone far when he heard children's laughter in the woods across the river. The stream was neither very wide nor fast-flowing, and at its deepest it did not come over his chest; yet he thought he would never get across it alive. When he was ten yards from the opposite shore he fell in exhaustion into the stream, and floated on the current more dead than alive. But he was caught in an eddy where he lay with his nose and eyes just sticking above water, slowly revolving under the green shade of an hospitable tree like a log in the pool. All he had to do to save himself was to crawl up under the tree onto a pleasant bank. But it didn't seem worth the trouble. It was too lovely there to move, looking up into the twining imperfections of this tree, cool and still and spread out and wet, slowly going about in the eddy, finally without will, only a thing that once had been able to think and now was at peace in the enveloping water, in one

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complete embrace happy. He does not yet understand why he ever climbed out of the water. He was not conscious of making a decision. All of a sudden it came to him that the sun had gone down and it was time to come home; before he could reflect on this odd notion (where was home?) he found himself climbing out on the bank, a live man again. Never since then has he felt anything out of the ordinary about floating in a river or looking at the sky, and he doesn't know exactly how to explain the experiences of that day—his fatigue perhaps, or the special air and water there, or his relief at finding his goal. What he is sure of is this—while he didn't know what to expect from the people of Faq', he was prepared for it when it came.

It was dusk when he approached the huts. They were long and thin, and all of them pointed up the valley toward the mountains. There were no windows in them. They were interspersed among tress. At some distance, he could see a large hut in which there were fire, cooking, noise, children. He crept up to the closest hut, and crouched on the dark side of it listening to the mutter coming from within. The muttering was fast and monotonous, in a man's voice. It seemed to be a praying in some Arabic dialect. He could make out some of the words, or thought he could; they seemed to be numerals. As he listened to that unflagging drone, it occurred to him that this must be a machine, no man could do it; but then he heard a clearing of the throat and a slight pause, and he realized it was a man all right, but a man imitating a machine. A praying machine. He thought of hermits.

Footsteps approached. He glued himself to the wall. He heard a woman murmuring, a slight altercation, a moment of laughter, stirring sounds, and then footsteps going away. He looked carefully around the edge of the building and saw a well-built young man, not an old one as he had expected, and a young woman. Side by side they were approaching the building of light and noise. Others were coming to it also. There were no dogs around; at least none had smelled him out, none were barking. He crept nearer the communal house. The odor of cooking food nearly made him faint, it was so pleasant. Neverthless, he lay low a while, trying to understand what was going on. It seemed completely unexceptional and happy. There were several men and many more women and a good many children. Three old women

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came out into the darkness and began singing quietly a song the like of which he had never heard, on the way to their hut. He saw a young man catch and embrace a struggling young woman at the door to the hut, to the general merriment, all with an openness which he had never so much as heard of among Mohammedans. He had no idea what would be best for him to do.

What he finally did was to walk straight toward the doorway crying as loud as he could, which was not very loud—"Food in the name of Allah!" . . .

Well, they took care of him, fed him and nursed him back to strength again. He learned later that he was the only outsider who had ever been allowed to live in Faq'—to stay alive, I mean, not just abide there. I think it was more than a matter of whim that he was allowed to stay. He was completely at their mercy and they could understand something of what he said; so much was in his favor, but mostly he helped himself with his own honest pride. After he had eaten some of the vegetable stew which is their chief food, watched intently by a hundred dark silent faces, the chief, Alfaleen, asked him in their dialect who he was. Now my geographer had noticed that no one had mentioned Allah and that the chief's style was very plain for Arabic, with none of those honorific courtesies universal among Mohammedans. He had noticed this, but hadn't known what to make of it. He answered, "Destroyer of boundaries." There was no response. Either they had not understood his accent or else they were not at all impressed. "Foe of all ignorance," he said. No response. "Seeker of truth." Then Alfaleen said to him, "What must be?" "What has always been will always be." Alfaleen repeated, "What must be?" "So long as there are hills the rain will flow down them in streams." Alfaleen repeated, "What must be?" "Each number will always have two neighbors." But Alfaleen asked again, "What must be?" And this time he gave the answer he would never before in his life have given: "Nothing." It saved him.

He has wondered a thousand times why he gave that unlikely answer. He had of course heard of the indeterminacy principle; he had heard, with fascination, that law is a matter of statistical probability and that truth is finally a matter of whichever of the many geometries best suits your needs. But since he had never

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been able to imagine such things he had not believed in them, and he certainly had never asked himself whether or not a stone *must* fall, two plus two *must* equal four. Yet he had said to Alfaleen, that black, cool, impersonal man, that nothing must be. He attributes this answer of his to the power of Alfaleen's mind. He was concentrating hard on understanding what was being said to him and on choosing the correct Arabic words for his answers, he was weak with fatigue, he sensed that much depended upon his answer, and he was alerted by the very strangeness of the question. Even so, he thinks it was the power of that other mind which put the answer into his mouth. He learned to respect that power.

For a week he convalesced. The women and children, among whom he stayed, treated him with all the friendliness in the world. Alfaleen had commanded him to tell them nothing about the place from which he had come, and had also commanded them not to ask him about it. He had nothing to do but to lie about listening to them, learning what their customs were and how they thought and what they were afraid of—not learning it so much as taking it in like the food and water and bright air. He observed that none of the mature men did any of the ordinary tasks, like gathering fuel, fishing, repairing the huts, irrigating the fields; they seemed to have some other work. The women did not resent this state of affairs; it had not occurred to them, apparently, that things could be otherwise arranged. The children were amazingly unrestricted and happy. There were at least twice as many girls as boys, for some reason, but the women did not seem to treat the boys with any great reverence. The children were not allowed to go near the huts at the other end of the village (where he had heard the man praying like a machine). Every morning Alfaleen would take the boys over five off to school. The girls learned from the women. Boys were punished for being too rough, too "manly"; girls were punished for using a number over 100. The children had a game which they loved to play, with innumerable variations: a boy would sit in a special position and begin to count in a low regular voice, and a girl or perhaps two or three of them would try to distract him. They would use every means imaginable except hurting: shout in his ear, caress him, throw cold water on him, count backwards in his same rhythm, put food in his mouth. Some of the boys had developed amazing

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powers of concentration, but the wiles of the girls were irresistible. No boy could hold out for more than a quarter of an hour—but no ordinary boy would have held out against those girls for two minutes, whatever he was doing. One little girl, about eight or nine, who was particularly attached to him—a quiet thing with a clumsy, strong body, rather deliberate, rather grave—told him one morning that she had had a nightmare about the end of the world. She had dreamed, she said, that "they came to the end of the counting and I was one of the ones left over." A little boy who got angry with him once called him a "slow counter". From the awed silence and snickers with which the other children greeted this, he concluded that it was a serious insult. The women and children were the happiest he had ever seen; yet there was nothing intense about what they did, they seemed never to have suffered. He was too feeble, to contented, to feel any strangeness about all this; while it lasted, it seemed exactly the way things should be. But when he was strong again at the end of a week and Alfaleen removed him from his idyl, he was glad it was over.

At first Alfaleen asked him questions about the world from which he had come. "Which men are most revered? Which have the greatest power? For what is a man put to death? What is God nowadays?" But the questioning did not go on for long. Alfaleen was feeling him out, determining just how to introduce him to the life which he was entering. To one who lives with beauty hourly, as to a man in love, the various semblances of beauty to which he may be exposed are all imperfect and not in the least interesting: he wants to be with the true beauty. Alfaleen's was the beauty of truth, and he wanted to share it. He tried tricks and deceptions in his questionings, but he was hopelessly honest; it was clear that no one had lied in Faq' for a long time.

Well, the upshot of it all was that he was deemed worthy to become a bearer of the mystery of the truth, a participant in it. He was taken to a hut of his own in the men's section of the village, a bare, dark, quiet hut, and there taught to count. One sat in a certain manner—the way the boys had sat in their game—, weaved in a certain rhythm, closed one's senses to the outside world, thought only of the perfection of one's technique, and counted in a steady voice. He was given a block of numbers very

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high in the series, told certain permissable abbreviations and short cuts, and left each morning to his counting. Alfaleen instructed him each afternoon in the history and aims of Faq'. He understood it all in a way. He was quite good at counting. But then he had to be: anyone who fell below a certain monthly quota was put to death. So was any cheater. Alfaleen would prowl about outside the huts listening to the voices of the counters—two or three times a day he came by, so keen and trained that he could tell by the very cadences of the murmuring count whether the counter was in danger of falling behind. There were no cheaters.

In the tenth century, when the Arabs were conquerors of North Africa and Spain and were also developing advanced mathematical theories, a nobleman-mathematician named Alfaleen stopped in the province of Maraq' while en route to Spain to enter the faculty of the new college of mathematics. But he fell out with the theologians of Maraq' and was condemned for his heresy. Alfaleen had maintained that pure reason, and only pure reason, could ever achieve the truth, and that since thought was the greatest power in the universe then Allah must be thought. According to the theologians this was as much as to say that the Koran wasn't worth a couple of quadratic equations and that if God is idea then idea is God. To rescue the youth of Spain from such notions, they recommended to the governor of Maraq' that he execute Alfaleen. But the governor was an old friend of Alfaleen's father; instead of executing him, he had him and all his party driven off into the granite wilderness to perish for his heresy. And that would have been that; but by some hook or crook, they fell in with a band of native blacks, found Faq' and established a colony; their descendants have lived there in peace ever since. They had no animals or tools, but none were needed. The outside world scarcely knew they were there, and any stranger who happened to come to Faq' was put to death.

So far as their traditions tell, the constitution of Faq' has remained unaltered since its founding: the laws of reason are ageless. There is Alfaleen, the chief, the philosopher, the king; there are the men, who count; and there are the women, who do the work and tend to the men. The original Alfaleen, to whose genius Faq' owes its peace and its purpose, had by the exercise of pure reason seen the folly of racial distinctions; blacks and Arabs had inter-

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mingled as they desired, the third Alfaleen was himself pure black, and by now the blend of races is complete. He had seen the problem of keeping down the population; defectives, women who can no longer work, innovators, are all put to death. The ratio of women to men had been kept fairly constant at three to one. Though the women, having no souls, cannot be entrusted with the high mission of Faq', yet the actual survival of the colony has come more and more to rest upon them—they weed out the unfit, they maintain everyone physically, and they keep watch on the men. Inded, though Alfaleen is the governor, it is the women who actually make and execute all the rules and customs—except, of course, those having to do with the only thing that matters, the exercise of pure reason, the counting.

For Alfaleen had set his people reason's purest problem, number. And each Alfaleen, chosen solely for his ability, spends his life in the contemplation of number and the attributes of number, in the confidence that the penetration of this mystery, the final conquering of it, will lay bare the secret to all power. But not many men are capable of such true and ultimate endeavor; hence, as soon as the colony had stabilized itself, Alfaleen, like a good philosopher-king, had set his subjects to the accomplishment of a communal task, one which in its very nature surpasses any other that men have set themselves; counting. By hypothesis the highest nameable number is as far from the end as unity, and there is no end to counting. It is the function of Faq' to test this hypothesis in the only statistically verifiable fashion, actually by counting forever.

The women may not use a number greater than 100; the life of Faq' does not make larger numbers necessary, and woman's reason would sully truth. Originally there was much defection from the strict regime, and at one time had the insurrectionists banded together they could have overthrown the rule of this godless theocracy, but Alfaleen won out. They have reached a very high number; they expect in our lifetime to reach the number beyond which numbers have no name. Into that darkness Alfaleen will shed the light of reason.

More and more in the past few centuries Alfaleen has come to believe that the core of the problem of number lies in its oneness-endlessness and that the original impulse which set the men of

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Faq' to telling the rosary of reason's mystery was not a mere expedient but rather the very mechanizing of the mystery itself. For this, says Alfaleen, is not only the activity of reason, it is reason pure, this counting, because only incidentally does it correspond to anything outside man's mind. It becomes clearer and clearer that without this endless and exact demonstration of reason's truth, all reason would be subverted and mankind go back to what it had been before.

Alfaleen said, and that he believes it I am certain: there is a sense in which man's destiny hangs upon those counters in Faq', for that they do not reach the end of counting is the demonstration of all hypothesis. If they should reach the end, reason would have done what is impossible to it and the rest would be chess, for then they would have proved that reason too has its law—absolute positive correlation.

But if they should quit counting, weary, exhausted, rebellious, defeated, then would you and I have succumbed at last to our weariness and rebellion and defeat, and the women would take over. . . .

At first he was exhilarated by the novelty of the life and what seemed to be the importance of the counting. At the outset, boredom was the dread at the back of his mind, but in fact he was never bored. The counting seemed to hypnotize him into a state of strange tranquility. He was tranced, as it were, into reason's realm. So much so, indeed, that it was not many weeks before he quite lost interest in exercise and food and the evening conviviality. Then girls taunted and seduced him, with an innocent artfulness and a voluptuous naivete which he found (as had the boys in the game) irresistible. One night he counted in his sleep, and all the next day he was required to play with children and make love to young women and lie in the sun. Everything was communal in Faq', property and love as well as the great task. It was a world of reason and sense and trance, and he found it far happier than the world of mystery and strong feeling from which he had come. But eventually he began to think.

Or perhaps not to think so much as to remember. He remembered the anxiety and injustice and despair and the huge splendors of this world, the poverty, the right and wrong, the power, the pain. Especially the pain. He told himself again and

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again that ten thousand sink that one may rise, that whole cities stink in ugliness that fifty men may make and enjoy only a little beauty. But not all the reasonableness he could muster, nor horror at his memories, nor the truth and high pleasantness of Faq' could drive the thought of pain from his mind. For it was pain, suffering, moral agony, that his memories revolved about. It became clearer and clearer to him that he could not live without pain, not even thus happily, not even thus participating in the great task of man's noblest faculty. He tried hurting himself physically; he had a large rock balanced precariously once, ready to roll onto his arm and smash it. But the absurdity of such an act here in this equable valley stopped him from doing it. And afterwards the indignity he felt at not having been able to prepare a greater pain for himself than this which any accident might provide, not having been able to go through with even this little thing, made him resolve to leave Faq' as soon as he could. For a long time he had been dissembling at his counting, with great anxiety and guiltiness. Now that he had resolved to leave, all this counting suddenly seemed silly to him, and he dissembled without a qualm.

He sat day after day in his hut making the sounds of counting, and often actually tranced into it—it had its own power. But most of the time he was planning his escape. It was necessarily an escape too, for anyone guilty of any defection, from bad health to rebelliousness, was without mercy or remorse killed. He collected food and water and made himself a substitute for shoes. He walked on rocky ground till his feet were horny. He played and swam very hard, till he was strong and supple. He had no human ties to break; four of the women were pregnant at the time, one perhaps with his child, perhaps all four, perhaps none, he did not care; he would miss Alfaleen's cold pure speculations, but never, he knew, so much as he now missed the pain of this world of ours. He lay in the sun till he was nearly as black as they, and in the middle of one stormy night he left. He was not pursued.

He returned to us after much difficulty. He is suffering with us now, and looking back at the bland perfection of Faq' with a sometimes acute nostalgia. But my geographer is determined never to go there again; for he is sure that though he does not know what is right for men, ordered perfection is wrong; and that though suffering is bad, the lack of suffering is much worse.

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ANTHONY HECHT

A Poem For Julia

Held in her hand of "almost flawless skin"
A small sprig of Sweet William as a badge
Of beauty, and the region of her nose
Seemed to be made so delicate and thin,
Light of the sun might touch the cartilage
With numerous golden tones and hints of rose
If she but turned to the window now to smell
The lilacs and the undulant green lawn,
Trim as a golf-course, where a haze revealed
The sheep, distinguished each with a separate bell,
Grazing and moping near the neighbor field
Where all the clover-seeking bees were gone,
But stood in modesty in the full sight
Of Memling, whose accomplished busy hand
Rendered this wimpled lady in such white,
Untinted beauty, that she seems to stand
Even as gently to our present gaze
As she had stood there in her breathing days.

Seeing this painting, I am put in mind
Of many a freakish harridan and clown
Who by their native clumsiness or fate
Won for themselves astonishing renown
And stand amongst us even to this date
Since art and history were so inclined:
Here, in a generous Italian scene,
A pimpled, chinless shepherd, whose rough thought
And customary labor lead the ram
Into his sheep for profit and for sport,
Guide their ungainly pleasure with obscene
Mirth at the comedy of sire and dam
Till he has grossly married every ewe—
This shepherd, in a mangy cap of fur,
Stands at the window still regarding her,
That only lady, if the pope speaks true,
Who with a grace more than we understand,
Ate of her portion with a flawless hand.

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And once a chattering agent of Pope Paul,
A small, foul-minded clergyman stood by
To watch the aging Michelangelo
Set his "Last Judgment" on the papal wall,
And muttered thereupon that to his eye
It was a lewd and most indecent show
Of nakedness, not for a sacred place,
Fitted to whore-house or to public bath;
At which the painter promptly drew his face,
Horribly gripped, his face a fist of pain,
Amongst those fixed in God's eternal wrath,
And when the fool made motion to complain
He earned this solemn judgment of the Pope:
"Had art set you on Purgatory's Mount
Then had I done my utmost for your hope,
But Hell's fierce immolation takes no count
Of offices and prayers, for as you know,
From that place *nulla est redemptio.*"

And I recall certain ambassadors,
Cuffed all in ermine and with vests of mail,
Who came their way into the town of Prague
Announced by horns, as history tells the tale,
To seek avoidances of future wars
And try the meaning of the Decalogue,
But whispers went about against their names.
And so it happened that a courtier-wit,
Hating their cause with an intemperate might,
Lauded his castle's vantage, and made claims
Upon their courtesy to visit it,
And having brought them to that famous height
To witness the whole streamed and timbered view
Of his ancestral property, and smell
His fine ancestral air, he pushed them through
The open-standing window, whence they fell,
O in a manner worthy to be sung,
Full thirty feet into a pile of dung.

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How many poets, with profoundest breath,
Have set their ladies up to spite the worm,
So that pale mistress or high-busted bawd
Could smile and spit into the eye of death
And dance into our midst all fleshed and firm
Despite she was most perishably flawed.
She lasts, but not in her own body's right,
Nor do we love her for her endless poise.
All of her beauty has become a part
Of neighboring beauty, and what could excite
High expectation among hopeful boys
Now leaves her to the nunnery of art.
And yet a searching discipline can keep
That eye still clear, as though in spite of Hell,
So that she seems as innocent as sheep
Where they still graze, denuded of their smell,
Where fool still writhes upon the chapel wall,
A shepherd stares, ambassadors still fall.

Adam and Eve knew such perfection once:
God's finger in the cloud, and on the ground
Nothing but springtime, nothing else at all.
But in our fallen state, where the blood hunts
For blood and rises at the hunting sound,
What do we know of lasting since the Fall?
Who has not, in the oil and heat of youth,
Thought of the flourishing of the almond tree,
The grasshopper, and the failing of desire,
And thought his tongue might pierce the secrecy
Of the six-pointed starlight, and might choir
A secret-vowelled, unutterable truth?
The heart is ramified with an old force,
(Outlingering the blood, out of the sway
Of its own fleshy trap,) that finds its source
Deep in the phosphorous waters of the bay,
Or in the wind, or pointing cedar tree,
Or its own ramified complexity.

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JAMES MERRILL

Orfeo

And downward through the dark coulisse
Was moved to walk the stage of hell,
Unwind as in a theatre gilt and puce
His opulence of pain until

Each damned soul dropped its trembling fan
(Which in the gusts of wooing trembled still)
And wept to hear him: it was then
Sickeningly he divined against his will

Among the shadows of a box
That brow, that hand outspread upon
The plush worn bare, a white peacock's
Genius at dusk on a dissolving lawn,

Her loss within his music's rise and fall
Having become perpetual.

The Bed

Where do we go, my love, who have been led
Afire and naked to our firelit bed?
For look! someone is sleeping there, his head

Pinned to the pillows by his own left arm,
Who sinks, who in swift currents of alarm
Sinks glistening (as though the night were warm)

Down through the rocking fathoms of the skin
To where the dreamers, brows on arms, begin
Bearing the dream each has been trammeled in.

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Love at the sea's edge turns the turbulent waves
To sculpture, silken body that behaves
As if no paths were but the path love paves.

So with the stranger tangled in our sheet:
Seeing his mouth move, hearing his heart beat,
No lover hears the words his lips repeat,

And none dares question if the dream is good
That plunges him in nothing understood
Down down until, like bait beneath a flood

Suspended where the unseen mouthings feel
For food in darkness, it is him they steal;
And none knows—when to grasp the spinning reel

The mind wakes, winds it back in joy and fright—
If what has torn him in our own bed might
Not first have sought us there! Ah, for tonight

Let us seek out a bed that's less our own.
There is a kind of sleep which we have known
Both pleasureable and calm. Leave him alone,

Come, leave him to his dream. Too long we've kept
Watch by this bed familiar except
For one strange sleeper. It is time we slept.

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GENE BARO

The Horseshoe Crab

For Marguerite Young

The life of the mind is inexact at the sea's
bottom, but makes precisely the translucent
skeleton that the beaches receive, the sands yield,
makes the immemorial domed carapace,
the tender spike and the eating claws,
the tried shape neither of land nor water, named
hastily in a metaphor.

There is evidence of the sea's accretions:
sunken islands and islands of floating weed,
ships lost long ago, treasure, and bones
of men and of birds. There are growing brains of coral,
thinning beaches, forms multiplied
to extinction, in all delicate colors of death,
or in death's dissolution.

Some fragments remain, some signs of the sea's
strategies: wreckage. Still, no logic
explains the sure horseshoe crab's fitness
amid starfish, eroded shells, and sea-hoar,
in the timeless trial of land and water,
in the final irresolution. Personal death
is an idle speculation

confronting at once this fortitude
and ease, this permanent generation
among the sea's ambiguities. The shape
of the horseshoe crab is the oldest habit, known
but none the less astonishing,
reflecting or rejecting the intelligent choice or fate,
the domination of progress.

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The horseshoe crab is also the king
crab, by virtue, perhaps, of tenure, or by
the more immediate persuasion of success,
being always the elegant figure,
neither rising nor falling with the spindrift of sea
rabble, neither vanishing nor changing with sea change,
being remarkably

the aristocrat and entrepreneur
of destiny, being the elect, endowed
with inexplicable perfection, beyond the sea's
reach of casual selection. The question
at least can be known. The sea has no
conservatives, since the ages of horseshoe crab crawled
in a king's wasted acre.

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HAROLD KAPLAN

Words in Winter

When the cold day's landscape
Is a scathing truth
And the bone cracks
In winter's frankness,
Let whimperers retreat to summer
Where the murky bee spits cloying honey.

Sharp as zero
The wind stops longing
And ice restrains
The crazy flood,
Such wisdom admonishes the rowdy wishes
In all the green outbursts of spring.

Freedom is cured
Passion is quiet
Nothing can spoil on these white days,
The bare tree shows in its shuddering branches
Immortal birds and transfigured flowers.

The poisonous liquids
In summer grasses
Confuse the conscience
And inebriate life;
Sober judges on the stormy roof,
You tell every man to come home from his youth.

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GEORGE STILES

Sudden Danger

"AWAKE?" SHE OPENED HER EYES, now, all the way and looked up exactly as the fine apricot tone of the interval that followed her hour of quiet deepened abruptly and startled her into faint irritation; having, now, the sensation of being (her own phrase and, she mutely criticized, an absurd one) inundated by awareness; her mind emerging numbed from its bandage of sleep with the malaise of an experience as yet not defined, as with the senses of an etherized patient exposed to the weather.

He did not, noted Myra, half gaily-sad, come. "I didn't," she reproached, "hear you. Harriette, I did not even," she turned her face, "hear you come out," then smiled. Harriette's monolithic grin fused with the raw steak color of her broad kind unmemorable features; at the same time, occupied, she was drawing the white oval table over close to the bed.

"Did I snore? Did I?" urged Myra.

The smile soaked, a shade deep, into the indelible red.

"Only—."

"Only, Harriette, only what?"

"*Just*," Harriette, delicately, said. She slid a sampling arm down in back of Myra's shoulders, bore, with gentleness, Myra's weight and shook the pillow out and settled it once again behind the at once comforted body. She made a furtive snatch at the sheet, giving it a muscular tug, and smoothed it back underneath the mattress with a covert stroke, as if anxious to suppress this essential operation. Myra brushed with her nostrils the renewed linen, it smelled even, she decided, wholesome again, smelled septic and restored as when, mornings, a miracle of rubbed and scoured flesh, of daily laundered uniforms, Harriette came downstairs to the terrace.

"Oh," Myra, gratified, moaned, "good. Good Harriette," docile and watching Harriette give limitless attention to the arrangement of the doll table, its radiant surface hidden under a chill white napkin spread and a shower of silver: a pair of spoons, sinuous and invalid frail, for tea, a butterknife, a knife for paring

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toast and a large spoon for the simple marvel of Harriette's consomme. "Consomme and tea—tea," sighed Myra, "and consomme." A breeze risen from the green topknot beneath the terrace fingered the napkin with an airy rustle and Myra felt it along her lids like a trifling insect's breathing.

"And toast—to," said Harriette, "make madame strong."

"It," Myra said, "makes madame tired."

Harriette, openly, at this, locked her own unoffending two lips with her thumbnail, in silent signification of silence. "Talk," continued Myra, "is the breath of life to a woman, don't," she implored, "forbid me, Harriette, the breath of life." Life or merely, breath, as she spoke, left her too fast, too soon tiring her.

But, "Madame," said Harriete, "must." Myra capitulated and listened, in melancholy, to the tune, carried from below, of a plundering rake rampant among the sweet pubescent grass, clawing little rigid cleats along the sides of obstinate pebbles. "Is that the gardener? I want to," Myra pleaded, "please see what he is like, Harriette, please."

"An old—? Who could it be but a simple little man, a simple old gardener?"

Myra ached to sit up to look once at the gardener, who obscurely she felt to be not one with common mortals but, in her thoughts, incarnate of all those roving creatures who, any day, any night, foray at their defiant pleasure among the acquiescing gardens; and she would have, for this one moment, liked to glimpse the simple gentleman who, from this altitude, Harriette could serenely view and dismiss severely from her regard.

"Ask him, Harriette, how is the timothy?" She steadfastly raised herself, in fancy called down to the gardener, "How is the thorn flowering? How—?" had, at this, to laugh at herself, shutting her eyes and tiredly laughing and, in her chest, commencing to feel, as of a valve being partly open, a thin urgent trickle of warning, of danger. She hugged the small green bottle against her hurrying heart: tap, her heart went, tap, tap, tap, as though a prisoner blindly sealed and pressed inside the hidden green little bottle. "It's only," she thought, "the fever," in thinking this, she, however, asserted it aloud as though to Harriette, at the bedside, motionless, her fingers coddling an object she was holding unpleasantly: a small fine point that, like a jewel, was

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kept hooded and which, unsheathed to the vision, stabbed with its furious tip the heeding sun.

"No, Harriette," Myra begged, "not this once, it was only," she wheedled, "the fever." Her heart, furtive, a captive, threw itself with disruptive force against the glass cell of the dim green bottle.

The nurse remained watchful, still stiff and patient, the instrument purposeful in her hand. "Doctor will be cross with you madame, madame," said the woman, "will see."

"I will behave, I will, I promise I will," she assured Harriette, "just now it's just that I don't want, I want —." What, just then, she wanted was for some sure cool hand to stroke away the invalid blisters from her brain: her own fingers were uncomfortable, lean and hot, the veins showed, she saw, clearly along her palms, spreading throughout her knuckles like a cheap blue pigment never properly drying and commencing to run. Harriette's touch was, though cool and sure, reassuringly mortal upon her hand that Myra was holding before her eyes, a shield against the sun and breeze that, when she turned her head, she felt dimly stirring upon her face.

A scent ascended from below and she suffered its essence, thought: *He did not come*, once more amusing herself, her lids half shut, by tracing, her lips colored by the sun-smile upon them, the path *he* would take were he really so bold as to follow her here. *So bold*. It gave her a sly buried pleasure, idling here, to invent for herself the character of his coming, and she dreamed off toward the abetting sun, as inside her there flowed the liquid torrent of her fever.

She smelled his presence before seeing him, his coating of white so innocent and innocuous with, at the same time, the bad medicated smell that she had so often been aware of but with no possibility that she would grow used to, ever. As he reared above her cushioned head, like a great, all white gull, a bird of prey (pray, pray, said her fever) there was not a shadow, she saw, to him, and this uniform whiteness of him she found an abuse of her sight.

"But what," she had said, "is to become of me?" when, that is, Doctor Marcus had turned her over to this new one, not even, for she had never seen him before, an assistant, what an altar boy is to

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a priest, although she knew Doctor Marcus to be neither priestly nor sanctified, except, in one way, by his humane calling, in some way purified by the suffering of, the pain of, these whose bedsides he watched over, an overpowering guardian, a slightly dismaying angel. "You are not very kind," once she had said to him, however imbecilic, from her, may have sounded such an accusation with little Doctor Ponte there alongside. "Kindness is often," Doctor Marcus had responded, "the guilt of the humanitarian," and had not looked, in saying so, either kindly or humane.

"Doctor Ponte here will see to it, Mrs. Shield, that nothing does happen to you," Doctor Marcus here having indicated for her his mute companion; and she had disliked, of a sudden, the two of them, for all alone as she was she was helpless to manage the frictionless surfaces of their smiles, conspiratorial as a medical prognosis with, she knew, herself as object. "There is nothing much I can do —," she had shivered, had been numbed, had dreaded that he would stop there, "—that Doctor Ponte cannot do as well. It is that you, Mrs. Shield, will have no further need of my puny powers. They require my presence out there." Those who, 'out there', hidden from her vision, as was the gardener, and the even flowing grounds beyond the terrace, Myra knew, for he had waved in their direction, to be the institution people whom at her first visit she had glimpsed, in deck chairs with, to spite the sun, their wasting bones overlaid by electric blankets plugged into lamp outlets at their elbows; and all the long day under the sunny heaven the current, they called it the juice, fed their poor ruined members, soaked through their skin of blanket and pressed a little lying warmth in between the pores and crevices of their drying flesh. They were as some late invention of man, human doll forms that had to be, like the radio, tuned in before symptoms of animation might be discerned under the magic blankets.

Doctor Ponte, his form like a snowman's impossibly glowing, the sun spilling all over it, was following thirstily the steep climb and climax of her fever in red markings upon the chart he was holding out in front of him. He looked at her, making sounds, a phrase, or more, a sentence emerged within the parenthesis of his mustache; but Harriette was not at his side and Myra, without Harriette, did nothing, she could but smile and smile sunnily, at Doctor Ponte, at the language, strange to her, that was passing

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over her head and which buzzed in her hearing but which she did not dimly comprehend.

Then Harriette issued, ruffled, her cheeks like radishes, into place at Doctor Ponte's side and, after him, and in the doctor's own words that, as she passed these on to Myra, took on the solemn cadence and shape, the gravity of responses, "I am Mrs. Shield much pleased," out of breath uttering what the new man was saying through herself, Harriette, a baffling medium; his words, as Harriette murmured them, remained arid for Myra, for Myra saw them, first, engraved by the glinting mustache but formed, a second time, beneath the plain unadorned lip of Harriette, "much pleased and," with a hollow reverberation in his throat, one which it would have taxed Harriette to repeat or reproduce, "as a matter of fact—." Though the nurse finished and was silent, too, surveillant and waiting, he did not complete his utterance and he, as a consequence of this, it occurred to Myra to note, looked, she thought, *much* embarrassed. She could not but regard him; but he glittered so, he loomed so harshly and rashly, so almost odiously white. There was the smell to him, as Myra had perceived it, that was powerful and impure and disguised as something beneficent. She considered, tolerantly, if she would faint under the little snapping eyes, or if he had noticed that she spiritlessly attended; there, in fact, had been a lapse in her brain equivalent to the spaces between thoughts made up in dreams.

"Thank you," Myra said, looking, immoderately weary, at Doctor Ponte's lips, at the doctor moving his arms in a prayerful arc, in a blesisng, it seemed to her, barely leaving out Harriette, who had detached herself and nurselike, resorted to the ritual handling of the objects on the altar-like table alongside the bed. In her white garments, she appeared an acolyte in pious attendance upon the mysteries, and it was the doctor who, before Myra's eyes, authorized the disturbing impression: as Myra watched, Doctor Ponte touched the left side of his chest, above the heart, soberly, with the right hand, and gently then, and with the same formal gravity, guided his hand back over his chest, resting it an instant relaxedly upon his right side. To her accepting state his gesture was the beginning, or the uncompleted end, of the Sign; she might have, before it, bowed her head, but for knowing that he had been illustrating, for her, her inner infirmity, with use

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of his pouter chest as a chart for his designs; and she had, of her lungs, a, just then, merciless glimpse through Doctor Ponte's eyes, with little colored pins flaring out of all the overrun areas: here we choose to make a killing, there a stand, there and here the enemy are in superior force. She felt her wrist seized and her fingers entangled lightly in a grip moist and frolicking, like a hound's frisky caress, not exercising any pressure yet bringing her hand down at her side, the male lining of hair curling inside the curve of her palm.

"*Much* obliged," she said and closed her eyes to the large nose starting out from the unfastidious olive features. "Harriette, say to Doctor Ponte, you say," tiredly directed Myra, "Mrs. Shield is obliged," her mind dropping away drowsily from the obstacle of their unavailing tongues, in this country so possible for disease, for the sickness she was slightly sickened to acknowledge as her own, as she, once, had also been shamed by her frail output, those weak, those abandoned, somewhat maimed and piteous, yet durable, somehow, fragments that, pressed one against the other, had gone into her maiden book, *Coda*, skimpy and deluxe, that, Myra had, to M, and that almost in tears, characterized as "the literary abortions of the parson's spinster daughter"; to such, then, a country as this, lacking expectations, lacking adequacies and even rainfall, one, in the end, came out of one's own destroying lack. You knew this, you were made aware of this wherever you looked: everywhere were ruins and gardens, and behind this facade of roses and morning glories, the blooming contagion of the sick, the terraces with the diseased, legally and forlornly, deep in their steamer rugs, being fed upon by the national sun.

Thinking, with longing, of M, and love: *sudden danger*, Proust says of it, of love, as in her mind, understandingly, she turned over again that old trouble in eden, with love and appetite coiled, like a spoiling serpent, among all the blood red fruit. Eve was open-handed and not, as had been Myra, lucky in her treasures, although like every woman since Adam's, vulnerable, ardent equally to give and guard, to give up in a prayer and in a communion of passion that chastity that is both a hope and a check to the blossoming of the race. Between M and Myra nothing had blossomed from the first reverent ordained and unblessed interval of consummation, in the space of yielding to M her, to her, unripe

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unregretted virginity, momentous, though, for her and for him. For life, in forthright assertion against, at such a time, the solid bitter untruth of its unreality, is the dream grown real as waking, is, in the instant of decline, an old miracle reviving, as everybody must know that it must, that it would: deep as that other miracle of ritual and revival that also wrings from us our assent and anguish, the voluptuous and measureless Mass. Love is the achievement of life; life: death's momentary and phantom absence.

Death had not long absented itself from M, in taking him lightly, its touch curing him forever of what had been life-given: his love and features. Myra was grateful: now, following that long need of him, she was gratified that it would, like the fragrance dispersed from the garden below that escapes between the gesturing branches, be M that, unsleeping, emerged to draw her out of hazard into innocence. No matter that she was no more, she thought, a young blossom; what awakened her to gratefulness was that M, lain between soil and soil, was nourishing new grass and trees, that there were shoots starting from his leavening bones, that he had not, as some, become one more dry and shriveled ash polluting the air above earth and under heaven like a missionary germ; her nostrils secreted and asserted his indestructible being there in the condemned landscape in this country where ruins overhung the ivy.

Longing for rain, for the end of fever, for once, peace, secretly, her expectations crowding her brain and cunningly, Myra drew upon love and tried to construct his coming; how, she speculated, would he come? Taking the weedy path out of the petrified village, overrating himself just a little; just at first, like a boy, swinging his body crisply and, after the first five minutes, perhaps resting himself on some gorgeously decayed smelling log to pretend to an interest he did not feel in the outraged creatures underfoot and when he got as far as the gate, vaulting over it, to prove to himself, and the gardener, that he had not been fatigued at all. Or lurking? Not after the authoritative fashion of her vision of him but lurking like some outcast who could not mount the gate and show off his youth to the gardener. Was it his, or her existence she felt: a lost pervading current (nobody had said it was to be like this) fine as frost, upon her feet, like an alien life running all through her limbs, her heart, in a cone of cool rushing

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air, limbs and body yearning sunwards. Is it another's or her voice? "Is that a lightning tree? Has the anesthetic been planted? It is," it cried, "certainly queer weather for growing pains." Joined to her own voice, that other's fled through her parting lips, brazenly hurried her breath forth among the muffling blossoms. There it was recovered at once, it there once more renewed itself upon the sunny suspiring breeze.

A crayon of movement, he came, at a bound, up the path and, in the angry light lingered, for an allotted moment, alongside the gate. The green bright tapestry parted, of itself, for him to enter. In the roadway, a workman, solitary and dedicated, ground under his rake the doomed leaves. Soundlessly, then, and stealthily past the gardener, inhaling as he moved a clot of smoke from the fumous pipe, in his nostrils the smell of mosses and old earth combined with the bad breath of trees sick at the roots, with jaunty grace he went up the steps and into the house without stopping but came upon no one there; the largely comfortable room was empty but for flakes of light, unwilling prisoners beneath the circumspect surface of the furniture; the white glass doors invited his figure to pass through them to the terrace; an unrelieved resonance, the sound of powerful fingers plucking the strings of the mourning grasses entered his hearing: and he remained there between the glass doors to loiter and listen.

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WILLIAM BECKER

Notes on the Broadway Season

BY COMMON CONSENT, THIS WINTER'S SEASON has been a poor one. Yet even in a poor season, perhaps especially then, it is possible to learn a good deal about what Broadway is and what it thinks. At the moment, since there seem to be no new fashions to disport, Broadway is singularly well exposed in what can probably be taken for its natural state. And while from one point of view this state may be unworthy of the most serious criticism, from another it is by no means unworthy of the most careful observation. For in the absence of alternatives, it would appear that whatever intelligent theatre there is to be in America must ultimately emerge from the context of Broadway. And perhaps after all nudity is the best state to begin from.

I

Among the many new plays, an appalling number of which closed in short order, three seem to have caught the public fancy. And of the three, the most startling in Jan de Hartog's *The Fourposter* at the Barrymore. For me it was startling not so much because of its merits as because of the extremely unBroadwaylike tradition to which it belongs. It is perhaps the only thoroughly French play well written in English and finely performed by Americans that I have ever seen. A virtuoso comedy for two actors, it implies that long line of gay, sentimental, slight but rather exquisite, marital farces familiarly found sandwiched in between the classics at the Comédie-Française. And like those farces it depends for its effects not so much on its literary values as on its theatrical ones: its comedy is derived from the subtle interplay of the lines with consummately performed bits of stage business. It is as if in the absence of a supporting cast, the props and stage furniture fulfilled its function; and the performance is all. One gives oneself up undemandingly to the ingenious dexterity of the actors and the director. The ordinary American counterpart of this sort of play is the cooing drivel endlessly performed by the Lunts, and thus it comes as a real surprise to find that there are two American actors who can go about the business of being adultly in love with a minimum of maudlin nonsense and a maximum of unashamedly delightful farce. Compared to Hume Cronyn and Jessica Tandy, the Lunts are at best charming stage personalities; the Cronyns are brilliant performers. The play itself, a simple series of incidents in a lifetime of marriage, makes no pretention to be anything but a vehicle; yet it demands a special and rare skill of its author—the thorough awareness of what virtuoso performers can do and the ability to keep them doing it. In this play the attitudes to life are quite conventional, and the techniques are familiar; yet skilful examples of the *genre,* even at this level,

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are worth having because they tend to keep alive a traditional resource of stage-art and by not assaulting our intelligence do not manage to insult it either.

Another success which depends for its effect even more absolutely on a brilliant performance is John van Druten's adaptation from Isherwood's *Berlin Stories,* called *I Am a Camera,* at the Empire. Strictly speaking, *I Am a Camera* is not a play at all, and so exemplifies what seems to be a fairly general disposition in current Broadway playwrighting: a deficient sense of what Aristotle called *mythos,* conceived by him to be the soul of the drama. What has become of the simple interest in plot, in incident, in what happens—in short, in the telling of a good story? One often reads that S. N. Behrman "has trouble with plotting" and in England Christopher Fry has been heard to complain that he can never think of a story. This is to confess that playwrighting has become an odd kind of business; for what important play does not have at its core a finely conceived narrative? No amount of witty decoration or psychological portrait drawing can compensate for a want as essential to drama as engaging and meaningful incidents. But Mr. van Druten's new piece is primarily only a vaudeville sketch: a clever portrait of the kind one ordinarily associates with Ruth Draper or Cornelia Otis Skinner. The central study of Sally Bowles, a flamboyantly bohemian creature, performing her way through a flagrantly, scrupulously amoral life, with only occasional and temporary lapses into a touching seriousness, is accurate enough and full of theatrical energy. And as performed by Julie Harris, it is wonderful to watch. But it remains a romp, not a play. For tacked on to Miss Harris's fine sketch is a lot of irrelevant and undigested stuff about Nazis and Jews, about writers observing events like cameras, about rich American tourists abroad on a lark—all of it meant perhaps to suggest a general context, but so crude in its observations of life (especially of Berlin life in the twenties) and so incoherently assembled that it suggests nothing at all beyond the frustrated meandering of a playwright in search of a plot. The piece is set in a framework with the writer Christopher Isherwood commenting portentously and mawkishly on his own observations which make up the body of the play. And since the role of Isherwood was taken by William Prince, who gave a bad untalented performance, full of mugging, actorish tricks, and phoney "dramatic" delivery, the joy one felt at watching Miss Harris's exhibition was constantly being punctuated by wearisome, even embarrassing, interludes that were as pointless as they were irritating. Perhaps the best commentary on Mr. van Druten's plan and also the most obvious tribute to Miss Harris's talent was that in general the play suggested far more the atmosphere of Oxford (a la Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*) than it did any continental atmosphere, least of all that of Berlin. The analogy carries over even into the sketch of Sally Bowles, who is the prototype female on which the Oxford homosexuals of Waugh's era modeled their flamboyant lives. But it must be admitted that if the piece

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doesn't exist as a play and has nothing to offer as intelligence, it does nonetheless brilliantly exist as an occasion—and one was grateful to Miss Harris for a solo performance of real quality.

Doubtless the third success of the season was meant also to be an outstanding solo triumph—this time for Jose Ferrer, who directed *The Fourposter* and is fast becoming the most energetic actor-director-manager on Broadway. As it turns out, the play, the performance, everything about the evening, can only be described as a hopeless turkey. The thing is called *The Shrike*; it was written by an actor named Joseph Kramm; and it is presently filling the house at the Cort Theatre. It is a stupidly written, epically insignificant piece of nothing about a woman who traps her separated husband into returning to her by refusing to get him out of a hospital for the insane after he has attempted suicide. The "tragic" choice for the husband is supposed to be between life with a vulturous wife and the certainty of being driven really insane by remaining in the hospital, where he is at the mercy of idiotic would-be psychiatrists. There are dozens of tedious travesties of psychiatric consultations, and a few jokes like "Of course we're all here; the question is: are we all there?" Mr. Ferrer, in the standard tradition of actor-managers, filled his cast with mediocre players (Kendall Clark as the chief psychiatrist was especially obnoxious—worse perhaps than he was as Brother Martin in *St Joan*) who postured about the stage and attempted to emulate the phoney histrionics of Mr. Ferrer himself. And I doubt that there has been a performance in many years as unconstrainedly false, vulgar, and hammy, as was Mr. Ferrer's. Not that it much mattered, since nothing could have mattered really, once the play had been chosen. But the pathetic point is that Mr. Ferrer can be an actor of extraordinary talents, and it would be a good thing for Broadway to have an old-style actor-manager. England has one in the person of Donald Wolfit, the difference being that Mr. Wolfit's chief playwright is William Shakespeare. But Mr. Ferrer is even now the darling of the Broadway critics, and seemingly can do no wrong. What therefore might have looked like a fine possibility, now looms as an awful threat. It is too bad.

II

The reputation of Eugene O'Neill is possibly the most revealing symptom of The Predicament of the American Drama—the predicament being that such a drama scarcely exists. The passage of time which has removed the special circumstances surrounding O'Neill's meteoric success in the twenties and also the absence of his plays from Broadway in recent years have worked in an ambiguous way on the O'Neill Myth. O'Neill is still the culture-hero of the Broadway Intelligentsia; yet the literary intelligentsia have long since taken to viewing him with condescension, when they view him at all. No other American playwright has been so mindlessly flattered—or so mercilessly ridiculed. To the Broadway critics, he is an unassailable "great": Brooks Atkin-

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son periodically fills whole columns of the Sunday *Times* with the most breathless admiration (". . . in comparison with Mr. O'Neill, Ibsen is a dogmatic writer in a form that seems arbitrary and contrived today."). But for O'Neill, academic historians of American theatre like John Gassner and Edmond Gagey would have no focus for their studies. On a more serious level—George Jean Nathan proposes, Eric Bentley disposes. Everyone has his special view tendered with reverence or vitriol or—perhaps most commonly—with some apologetics; and mine in general is that O'Neill is a mediocre mind with outsize pretensions, but endowed with a theatrical talent far beyond his means for employing it profoundly or well. But if there is any fairly general consensus, it would seem to be that whatever O'Neill's relative greatness or lack of it, his most important claim on our attentions rests largely with the earlier works—the unpretentious, realistic dramas of the sea and New England life. O'Neill's most die-hard worshippers now commonly repudiate works like *Days Without End* and *Dynamo*; there remains a foolish argument as to whether *Mourning Becomes Electra* is a "classic" or a hopeless travesty; but even those who tend to think O'Neill a pretentious and melodramatic simpleton are inclined to confess some admiration for plays like *Anna Christie* (1922) and *Desire Under the Elms* (1924). It was therefore especially useful to have these two plays simultaneously present on the boards.

Of the two productions, *Desire Under the Elms*, which opened ANTA's season at the ANTA Playhouse, was much the more satisfactory: partly because, as directed by Harold Clurman, the production itself seemed to be reaching for something beyond the limitations of O'Neill's writing, and partly of course because *Desire* is a better play to begin with. To direct O'Neill well takes genius: not because he is so difficult or so profound or so subtle, but precisely because he is so simple, so superficial, so naive. With regard to O'Neill, a director has constantly to be covering up the absurdities, particularizing the abstractness of it all, and generally adding a good deal of himself and his actors. He has, perhaps above all, to be able to resist the author's own stage directions; for O'Neill is apt to reveal his shamelessly phoney tampering with the possibilities of human experience even more intrusively in the actions he prescribes for his actors than in the dialogue he asks them to speak. Witness from *Desire Under the Elms: Her eyes fasten on the intervening wall with concentrated attention. EBEN stops and stares. Their hot glances seem to meet through the wall. Unconsciously he stretches out his arms for her and she half rises.* Unmitigated by its context, the falseness, the sheer absurdity, of the visual image is too much, and if the experience this business is meant to convey can be managed at all without acute embarrassment on the public's part, it has to be managed in some more credible fashion. Good directors are attracted to O'Neill by the theatrical soundness of his themes and by the fact that these constantly aspire to the highest histrionic pitches of passion. But O'Neill, if he is to survive at all, will always require the services of directors

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who can in some sense do his job for him; for as written, the themes are clumsy and the passions of the characters tend to be all like those in the stage direction just quoted—sheer, abstract, divorced from the incident, or at best only imposed on it. It thus becomes the director's job to restore something of the stuff of life, to reinvest the experience with something like natural quality, to shave down O'Neill's melodramatic hyperboles a bit and get away from his "essences" toward a vision of life that has in it more of real life and less of the sterile vision.

All this at least would seem to be the function of the O'Neill director *now*. That the task may not have been so special in the twenties is suggested by the impact O'Neill then made on critical minds as good as those of Lionel Trilling, Stark Young, and Joseph Wood Krutch. Perhaps it is merely that the best living American actors have so sophisticated us with regard to theatrical realism by their Stanislavsky-spawned dedication to honesty that we are more alive to the hollow contrivances of O'Neill's rhetoric than were the audiences of thirty years ago. And if this is the case, then it is easy to appreciate the instinct that prompted Robert Whitehead (ANTA's new managing director) to invite Harold Clurman to direct. For Mr. Clurman is not merely an accomplished director; he is also an articulate critic, and the intellectual father (via the Group Theatre) of Stanislavskyite or "Method" training in America. One would expect Mr. Clurman to be by nature most solid and realistic and honest in precisely those areas where O'Neill is most flimsy and romantic and fraudulent.

Whatever the reasoning behind the invitation, the choice was thoroughly vindicated. The evening was, more than anything else, a director's triumph. Yet one rarely felt Mr. Clurman's work as the careful imposition it actually was: it never seemed intrusive. There were certain fine touches one recognized immediately: as, for example, the comic contrast of voice and character in the two older brothers, who as O'Neill describes them are indistinguishable hulks. Acutely sensitive to several possible hints in the dialogue, Mr. Clurman built of these two a neat semi-vaudevillian team with the recurring joke founded on a bass voice statement with a tenor echo tagging deflatingly along behind. The device was carefully carried over into bits of stage business: the bass leans back in his chair and plumps his legs authoritatively on the table, the tenor starts to do the same but awkwardly finds there is room left for only one leg. By providing a bit of intentional comedy, these sequences not only came as welcome bits of light relief, but helped in addition to forestall much of the unintentional comedy in O'Neill's writing (even so the audience did occasionally giggle at the awful repetitions of "purty"). It also of course made for a *realization* of character (in the old sense of that cliché word). But the obvious touches, while very fine, were by no means what gave the production as a whole its special distinction. There was something else, more subtle, more of the real essence of fine directing—and also more difficult to

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describe. It was, primarily, a deep care lavished on each individual moment of the entire evening. Every line was so meticulously prepared for, so accurately timed and paced, that many of the outlandish moments one expected to arrive never arrived at all. Largely it was a question of the right pauses, the right emphases, the right bits of physical business between the lines. No one ever accuses O'Neill of theatrical unsoundness in the technical sense: his structures (the climaxes, the scene curtains, the general shape of the action) display as much know-how as the most perfectly "well-made" play. What astounds is the naivete of the dialogue that serves these structures. Yet Mr. Clurman showed how much can be done by carefully refusing to allow the words to ramble on at their own pace, by giving them a real context in gesture and voice, and by endowing every speech with a specific and believable motivation. It was a process of making the fantastic seem natural, and the contrived seem honest sense. And it worked.

At least it worked as well as one can imagine anything working on the play. Some of O'Neill's faults were irrepressible: the ritualistic sequences (short elliptical speeches echoing quasi-rhythmically and with an air of Significance back and forth between two characters—note the opening scene; another occurs during the first meeting of Abbie and Eben) were only a half-success. The convenient decision of old man Cabot to spend the night in the barn with the cows (whereupon Cabot's son commits adultery with his new stepmother) could not be made to seem anything but preposterously convenient. Many lines, but perhaps especially the final curtain lines with their last repetition of *—Purty, hain't it?—Ay-eh,* followed by the Sheriff's*—It's a jim-dandy farm no denyin'. Wished I owned it,* sounded just as fatuous as they read. In fact, it was pretty clear that the play as a whole could never be much more than a theatrical bulldozer: it hasn't in many respects the psychological sublety even of a work like *A Streetcar Named Desire.* Nor has it anything like the real and terrifying emotional depth of a play like Tolstoy's *Powers of Darkness,* which it resembles—in being a play about lust (for money, for power, for land, for vengeance, for flesh) in an agrarian peasant milieu and in concluding with the brutal murder of a baby. At best, it is not a play about which one can satisfactorily ask many questions: to be enjoyed it has merely to be acquiesced in, and it was Mr. Clurman's special achievement to have made that acquiescence just possible.

In such a production, it is always hard to do justice to the actors. It is probably not enough to say that they served Mr. Clurman's mise-en-scene with perfect accuracy. Yet that seems to have been pretty much the case. The general impression was one of highly polished, carefully considered work. Only one performance emerged as something more: and that was Karl Malden's portrayal of old man Cabot, O'Neill's attempted prototype of the old-fashioned New England farmer—strong, ascetic, materialistically driven, Puritanical, "hard" (as he is described *ad nauseam* in the dialogue). Mr. Malden is com-

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monly thought to be an actor of quite opposite capabilities: probably his performance of Mitch in *A Streetcar Named Desire*—the husky, good natured, young American, a bit soft at the core and sloppy about his mother—is taken as his norm. And perhaps it was only this predisposition toward his work that made the performance he gave seem such an extraordinary piece of virtuosity. It was an intensely real presentation, based on a controlled understatement of O'Neill's maniacal melodrama (some O'Neill oldtimers therefore thought it too "soft"), yet capable of full vigor and fury on the one or two occasions when the action could sustain them. Especially good was Mr. Malden's physical control: there was none of the mincing crustiness or feeble "character-acting" so often observed when young men undertake to portray old ones. His walk had the striding loose-jointedness of a man who has walked for years on soft earth in heavy boots. As his dangling arms were flung about by his huge frame, there was a clean impression of sinewy strength grown old. For me, the best moment of the evening was Cabot's jig at the beginning of the third act with the old man's taunts and whoops of delight carefully timed in and counterpointed with both his agile movements and the increasingly wild tempo of the fiddler. One should mention, too, that of all the actors only Mr. Malden managed to make the down Eastern accent sound like anything but a quaint reproduction of O'Neill's phonetic spelling. Much of the play's geographical point was often in danger of being lost in the noticeably Southern accent of Douglas Watson (otherwise an excellent performer in the worst-written role of the play) who played Eben, the youngest son.

If the central fault of *Desire Under the Elms* is that O'Neill has pared away all real human quality from his characters, leaving only a raw unrooted passion, the central and overpowering fault of *Anna Christie* is that the qualities he assigns his characters are the most conventional stage assortment imaginable. The play is about a stage whore who falls in love with a stage Irishman and who has for a father an unbelievably sentimental stage version of a Scandinavian sea captain. The whore repents, showing she is a good girl at heart; the Irishman is duly outraged by the idea of a whore and endlessly calls on God Almighty and all the Saints to witness her shame and pack her off to the fires of Hell; while the captain (who is supposed to engage our sympathies because he is an old man and only runs a coal barge) says "By Jiminy" and blames everything whenever there is a lull in the dialogue on "dat ole davil sea". The snag, for O'Neill and his plot, is that ultimately the several conventional clichés he attempts to serve begin to contradict each other; and the third act disintegrates into a kind of purposeless wandering climaxed by a happy ending that is shamelessly pasted on. For who can be convinced that this brash, loudmouthed Irishman with his mind full of the icons and dogmas of Irish mob-religion could be so iconoclastic and broadminded as to forgive a confessed whore and even marry her? A very special Irishman *that* would have to be: and there was nothing very special about either O'Neill's Mat

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Burke or Mr. Kevin McCarthy who played him. Mr. McCarthy's performance would have been familiar to anyone acquainted with theatre in Dublin: it was not so much acting as it was extraversion in brogue. And as such it translated O'Neill's character pretty faithfully. But mere translation won't do for O'Neill; only recreation in the hands of a clever director and actors capable of bamboozling the audience with nuances of their own can save work like this.

Not that the production was outstandingly bad; on the contrary, there were moments of considerable interest. Whenever O'Neill was good, the play was good, but nothing much was done about the lengthy interstices. Perhaps the best thing during the evening was Grace Valentine's fine little vignette of Marthy Owen, the captain's beer-soaked old mistress, in the first act. O'Neill can be very incisive and realistic in his observations of minor characters—whenever, that is, they don't impinge on his themes or larger pretensions. Thus one could appreciate the honesty and talent behind Art Smith's portrayal of the old captain and even be momentarily moved or caught up or amused, but without ever being convinced by the character as a whole (how long does it take an old sea captain to recognize a whore?: captain Chris has to be told about his own daughter in the third act, though the bartender and Chris's mistress have no illusions from the moment she enters in the first scene). One admired the quietness of Celeste Holm's performance as Anna, especially in the third act where only the kind of authority she projected could mitigate the acutely unreal situation (which was not much helped by the ranting of Mr. McCarthy). Whether even Mr. Clurman could have made the evening exciting is extremely doubtful; but one did feel this production to be badly in need of a good director, who could at least have given the evening the sort of style Mr. Clurman gave to *Desire*. Any playwright can be helped considerably by the general accessories of a production, and with O'Neill every unreality in the staging serves to underscore the unrealities in the writing, in the themes, in the situations. Thus Emeline Roche's sets for the last two acts of *Anna Christie*, so obviously and badly painted on flimsy canvas flats, seemed to parallel in their unreality of texture the increasing foolishness of the action. On the other hand, Mordecai Gorelik's single setting for the ANTA production, while not outstandingly imaginative, was at least so firmly constructed and utilized so thoroughly the real textures of material (except for the two great cardboard elmtrees which fortunately only framed the stage and hence didn't intrude) that the action was given a solid context which permitted and even helped the audience to lend credence to the events.

III

One reason that so much fuss is made over O'Neill is that the Broadway Intelligentsia would badly like to have a native American theatrical tradition. Broadway has always been uneasy about accepting as its own the larger English language tradition of theatre; and beneath this uneasiness seems to be a real

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sense of inferiority in the face of British productions of those classics. The result of course has been that effete anglophilia which ensures almost any well-known British actor or company a gaga American audience for as long as he (or it) chooses to run. What accounts for the sense of inferiority is made clear enough if one manages to overhear remarks made during the intermissions at the Ziegfeld where Lawrence Olivier and Vivien Leigh are currently starring on alternate nights in Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra* and Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra.* The gimmick is Beautiful Speech.

It is not so much a question of accent as it is of articulation and rhythm. When an American actor attempts to affect a British voice, it is usually the case that he merely reproduces certain sounds differently, and the result is that hollow, phoney, stage voice which became the stock-in-trade of the minor members of the Eva LeGallienne and Margaret Webster companies. Now it is certainly true that the ordinary British actor speaks the English of Shaw and Shakespeare better than the ordinary American one; but there is no clear reason why any American actor, without losing his essentially American accent, could not learn to articulate clearly and to sense the general rhythms of Shakespeare's verse or Shaw's prose. At present, it seems, everybody, actors and audience alike, is being intimidated by a noise.

Which brings us to the essential point about the Olivier-Leigh productions. In most cases, the lines were beautifully spoken and the murmurs of the audience indicated their acute awareness of that fact; but Beauty is not always a handmaiden of sense, and in theatre is never a substitute for it, though, as the Olivier productions demonstrated, it is possible to hypnotize people without ever engaging their minds or touching their real emotions. In many ways these two productions exemplified a sickness that is very general in contemporary British theatre, a sickness, born one supposes of vanity and mindlessness, and characterized in theatre by the apparent desire not to reveal or even to interpret, but only to decorate. It is a kind of decadence of the spirit to which Marxist critics long ago attached the label Formalism. And in the Olivier productions it took the form of embellishing not only the speech but also the stage business with such extravagant rhetoric that the very incidents of the action were commonly lost—not to mention the meaning of the lines or their more studious implications.

Done in a lavish, artificial style, with fussy splotches of inharmonious and garish colors, both productions were well-nigh obscene in their ludicrous ugliness. They resembled nothing so much as one of Cecil B. DeMille's colossal historical epics. In the costumes, there was a good deal of needlessly exposed and not very attractive anatomy: Mr. Olivier's legs as Antony were discovered to be quite unheroic, and what his costume was meant to signify (since it was clearly of no use as clothing or armor) was never made clear. It rather looked like a polychrome version of the things in which cavemen are popularly draped in children's histories. The stage was heavily arrayed during most scenes with

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largely naked young men and richly decorated young women some of whom were used to hold up various undefined but highly colored obstacles (meant to be fans?) and some of whom merely postured and assaulted the eye. For both plays a revolving stage was used, and between the scenes, as the stage revolved, there was much traipsing of these unidentified young men and women to no apparent purpose. In *Antony*, especially, where the scene shifts some forty times, these processions became exceedingly tiresome, not to say bewildering. There seemed to be also some attempt, not fully realized, to make the minor Egyptian characters, Cleopatra's attendants in particular, simulate in their walk and gestures the queer perspective of figures in ancient Egyptian vase-paintings. In short, if the sole objective of these productions was to provide a luxurious pageant with romantic overtones, the objective was more or less achieved—but at what cost?

In each play the action and its meaning was reduced to the lowest common denominator, which was, in each case, a love story. If one considers how much politics is at the center of these two plays, how in Shakespeare, Rome is set against Egypt, and Caesar, Pompey, and Antony against each other, or how in Shaw the political nexus of the ancient world is set against that of the modern world; if one considers how deeply the action of *Antony* is molded by historical forces and political maneuvering, or how essentially the concern in *Caesar* is with the art of government and the policies of statesmen—if one takes these things to be the content of the plays and the love stories merely their occasions, then it is possible to comprehend the essential vulgarity of what the Oliviers put on the stage. Even the erotic themes—Antony who is a slave to love and Caesar who is above it—can at best be only trivial titillations when their context and their implications are so rudely ignored. Shaw himself remarked that "when art becomes effete, it is realism that comes to the rescue"; and in the case of these productions, it was certainly clear that art so divorced from life—from its thoughts, its attitudes, its real rhythms, even its incidents and its historical facts—ceases to be art at all. Thus, too, when words which should have meanings are reduced to pretty noises and stage actions which should have energy are submerged in prissy over-decorative effects, then drama ceases to be as well.

Having said so much, it would be as futile as it would be tedious to go into more detail. In general the manner of the performances proceeded inevitably from the barrenness of the original conception. It only remains to be noted that Shaw's play was far better done by than Shakespeare's; Shaw saw to that. In any hands, *Antony and Cleopatra* is a diffuse and difficult play for the stage, involving as it does a number of antagonists and a Marlovian spaciousness in its design. But *Caesar and Cleopatra* is so neat, so well-ordered, so witty and intelligent, so craftily wrought from standard stage material (Shaw had after all seen Henry Irving dozens of times doing to history precisely what the Oliviers do) that no amount of actorish nonsense can entirely defeat it. And everybody seemed happier and more energetic in the comedy, most of all Miss

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Leigh, whose performance in Shakespeare was (of all things) monotonous but whose young Cleopatra seemed to suit her pert beauty and was charmingly kittenish, cute, and right. Likewise Robert Helpmann: in the Shakespeare, as Octavius Caesar, his performance was fussy and effeminate, suggesting that Caesar had no time for women not because he was too devoted to the business of waging war and managing a state, but because he was too much a spinsterish ballet-dancer to care anyway; but as Appollodorus, in the Shaw, Mr. Helpmann put his balletic body to good use, decadently disporting his tummy, moving with real grace, and generally conveying a nice impression of the rich merchant-playboy having a good and witty time.

The point of all this, as far as Broadway is concerned, should be clear. So far from intimidating American actors, the common English sense of rhetoric ought to disgust them. Nowhere was this more obvious than in Maurice Evans's production of *The Wild Duck* at City Center. For Mr. Evans out-Oliviered Olivier. As Hialmar Ekdal, Mr. Evans was in fine voice, and rendered Ibsen's libretto with extraordinary variations ranging from *tremoli* to *vibrati*, and even on rare occasions to sweeping *glissandi*. The *a capello* score was of course Mr. Evans's own, and it had the peculiar feature of allowing all the roles except Hialmar's to be spoken. In the staging for Mr. Evans, there was clearly the influence of Puccini, and perhaps particularly the influence of *La Boheme*. Mr. Evans clutched his breast, rolled his eyes, put his clenched fist to his bowed forehead, and stumbled about with his knees bent. But for all this, I feel obliged to confess that operatic Ibsen is not so good as dramatic Ibsen. The experiment was not a success; jesting aside, it was an outrageous insult. Not so much perhaps for the audience, who laughed and enjoyed the spectacle, as for the other actors: it must have been excruciating for Miss Dunnock, who gave a splendid, meaningful, realistic performance as Gina Ekdal, not to be told in advance that she was hired for an opera.

The general air of the production was ludicrously summed up in a remark made by the stage designer: he was heard to be complimenting himself on a "departure from realism". In the anglophile world around Maurice Evans, this is presumably a supreme achievement. In the more prosaic world of Henrik Ibsen, it is an absurd indecency. "When art becomes effete, it is realism that comes to the rescue." And the question to be asked is why, when all the significant talents of the American theatre are precisely in the tradition of realism, this rescue is not more often effected?

IV

By Broadway standards, a poor season is one in which there are no new plays of merit; and by such standards (the meaning of merit apart) most seasons are bound to be poor. And yet Broadway is by no means an artistic pauper. Its resources—in actors, directors, and designers—are considerable. But Broadway is prodigal: it wastes its talents ruthlessly. No theatre can hope to survive intelligently by dint of new plays alone: the appearance of writing genius is

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too fortuitous for that. Yet at the same time that there are enough good actors in New York to supply half a dozen permanent repertory companies of the kind that sustain theatrical values in every major city of Europe, there is not one such company operating in New York—and the actor's trade union announces that the average income of its membership last year was $790. From the point of view of playwriting alone, such companies are the only possible investment for a theatre seriously interested in important returns. Where in America can a would-be playwright hope to learn his craft from the past masters of it? What American child can grow up and by the time he is twenty have seen, as almost any urban European child can, most of the major stage classics of the Western world? How can any American playwright hope to become the supplier of plays for an individual group of actors and directors from whom he learns as he works—traditionally an important donnée for European writers? Who knows how much dramatic talent in America has been rechanneled into other literary mediums for simple want of nourishment? There are several suggestive cases: E. E. Cummings, William Carlos Williams, Robert Penn Warren.

The odd thing is that in a country often ridiculed for its obsession with massive organization, the theatre should remain a disorganized, directionless monster. It may be that such jobs are partially the business of the country's intellectuals, but one can count the trained and capable intellectuals who take the theatre seriously on the fingers of one hand. For the rest, "alienation" has done its job; and there is even a kind of conspiracy among them to regard theatre as an inferior form of art. Thus the work seems to have fallen into the hands of persons only educated enough to perceive the challenge, but not talented enough to meet it. Idealists on Broadway are a sad lot: they hover on the pseudo-professional fringe, grasp the verbiage of idealism and none of the substance of it, and in the end manage only to bring the sound ideas they presume to represent into well-justified disrepute. As a body they form a special category of the Broadway Intelligentsia and all of them are understandably held in contempt by the shrewd commercial segment of Broadway and by the serious artistic segment as well.

Perhaps there are the germs of something in the seasons now being sponsored by the City Center and the American National Theatre and Academy. Yet one is inclined to be skeptical. At the City Center, Maurice Evans is firmly entrenched. And at ANTA, the list on the letterhead is liberally populated with members of the pseudo-professional fringe. It is true that ANTA made a step in the right direction in removing several of these people from the management of the Play Series and instituting instead a group which seems to be making sure that whatever is done is done in the best professional way. But whether ANTA succeeds or not, the general challenge will still remain; and apparently the best one can hope in the present circumstances is that the actors themselves will begin to organize in some way, if only in self-defense.

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GEOFFREY RANS

English Literary Magazines

THE SITUATION REMARKED AND DEPLORED by Mr. Rajan in *The Hudson Review* of Autumn 1949 has not much changed. Such changes as there have been are superficial; nearly all the periodicals Mr. Rajan mentioned have disappeared, the good with the bad, but this does not represent any fundamental alteration. If it means anything at all, it means only that we have now fewer bad magazines to read. With death all around a little breast-beating was to be expected; the curious thing is that not one of the public mourners has stopped to ask seriously what exactly it is that we have lost, to estimate its value above the paper it used. Mr. John Lehmann in a broadcast survey of the contemporary scene wished well to the survivors, and prayed for a multiplication of their number. He did not tell us just what qualities in the contemporary periodical justified his prayer. His point of view is typical in that it tacitly assumes that the provision of space for publication is in itself sufficient. It also betrays Lehmann's lack of any conception of the function of the literary journal (this was always implicit in his *New Writing*). It is of interest that *Scrutiny* was barely mentioned in his talk; it was completely ignored in *The Times Literary Supplement's* review of literary periodicals in its *Survey of Contemporary British Writing for Readers Oversea.* I believe that the desultory attitude of our editors about the proper function of the literary periodical of supplying a healthy critical environment for creative writing, and informing, not just "forming" (*pace* Mr. Lehmann) the taste[1] of the reading public, is itself responsible for the extinction of so many literary journals. A soft, impressionable public was created, a public at bottom apathetic and incapable of making any demands even if the magazines had been of the type of which it was possible to make demands. Without this demand and response, a literary journal is doomed to sterility; demands can only meaningfully be made in reference to critical principles, and these were lacking. This unwillingness to face the problems of editing has also given rise to the dominant form of English periodical, the miscellany.

The Cornhill, The Adelphi and *The Wind and the Rain,* the survivors among the miscellanies, are collections of articles, stories and poems whose only point of relation is, most generally, that they are bound between the same covers. The results of this are many and, I think, all bad. It makes the function of the editor more like that of the patron of literature; it encourages the use of selling names—not many new periodicals have the face to appear without

[1]This "formation" of taste, so much favoured by the superior editors of Bloomsbury, has led, for example, to a new outcropping of novels made after the Norman Douglas model.

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the name of T. S. Eliot in their list of contributors, even if his contribution is merely a remark in passing. Without an interpenetration of the critical and creative writing, any consistency of quality can be only fortuitous; at best we can expect only a particular type of writing. *Penguin New Writing* suffered from this fault. It was avoided by *The Mint*, which had unity imposed upon it by Geoffrey Grigson's critical discrimination. The point is not that miscellanies are completely useless but that, when they predominate, they encourage writing to satisfy a slack, omnivorous taste (this was the basis of the wartime boom) rather than an informed and critical sensibility.

The Cornhill is an example of the kind of journal I am getting at; it is a collection of unconnected articles, stories and memoirs by established writers. Often, undemonstrated and ill-informed comment passes as criticism if it is written by a "name"; Bloomsbury gets sentimental about itself in a memoir of Lytton Strachey as a young man; and preciosity is at its most ridiculous when, to understand the title *Chapels on the Riviera*, we have to be told in a note the two meanings of the French *chapelle*. The appalling quality of the stories seems to indicate that even its writers regard *Cornhill* as a vehicle for pot-boilers. But *Cornhill* is only a flagrant symptom of a more widespread disease.

An almost complete lack of critical principles vitiates book-reviewing in England today. We cannot complain of any lack of information, in review form, about new books. In all the important political weeklies, and in the two most intelligent Sunday newspapers, there is a large section devoted to book-reviewing, and there is, of course, *The Times Literary Supplement*, which directs itself entirely to this end. The appalling quality of the majority of book-reviews is in marked contrast to their apparent value to circulation. Perhaps the most irritating aspect of English reviewing is the unwillingness, or incapacity, of the reviewers to practise anything that remotely resembles criticism; there are very few of them willing to commit themselves about a book, even under the protective covering of anonymity provided by *The Times Literary Supplement*. Instead of a judgement backed up by a critical examination, we usually get a polite and elegant essay that does not always keep as its focal point the book under review. *The Times Literary Supplement's* reviewer of *The Liberal Imagination* misapplied and misleadingly paraphrased the author's ideas, and when he meant "Trilling also writes fiction", he wrote that Trilling was "in a class apart" with Forster, Edmund Wilson and Huxley.[2] It is not only the hasty reading and the half-considered, undeveloped bright idea that irritates but also the too frequent plain ignorance and lack of perspective. *The New Statesman's* reviewer believes that *World Enough and Time* represents "the false grandiose", is "portmanteau saga", "literature of inflation" compared with the "American tragedy", "the adult fiction" of O'Hara's *Butterfield 8*.

[2]Had this idea been developed and investigated, the reviewer might have found that his class was a little larger than he thought and less homogeneous than his words suggest.

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Even *The Times Literary Supplement's* middlepage, in which there is no shortage of space, is generally wasted on a genteel, discursive essay on an established literary figure, carried out in the characteristically ornate, limp style of English reviewing. There is, in short, no consistently reliable source of information on new publications; *The Times Literary Supplement*, as our leading literary weekly, does not carry the authority it ought; and it is extremely rare to find a reviewer who combines scholarship with critical ability to the extent that he is constantly authoritative.

Nine, edited by Peter Russell, a magazine of poetry and criticism, is interesting because it looks like an attempt to provide the "complete" literary journal, one that tries to make its principles relevant to the contemporary literary scene in part by the publication of new writing; there is, however, a wide gulf between its principles and its practice. *Nine* sets out "to replot the traditions of European culture" in order that we may the better understand the present. It therefore attacks "fashion" (*Horizon*) and lack of purpose (*The Times Literary Supplement*); it asserts the importance and potential availability of the past and impugns the universities for their reactionary attitude. *Nine* insists on the need for a continual revaluation of the past. So far so good; what is not so good is its devotion to literary sniping; for example, its editors consider Dr. Leavis "insidious". That they do not agree with Leavis is one thing; to abuse him is quite another, especially when *Nine* has so much to learn from him in the matter of effective criticism. To call Leavis insidious is plain silly, if not illiterate. This is not an isolated example; the editor, in an appraisal of Roy Campbell, refers to unidentified "putty-nosed intellectuals"; even if they were identified I do not think the epithet would carry much weight. Mr. Russell allows Roy Campbell to review W. H. Auden's *Collected Shorter Poems* and to use it as an opportunity not to examine the poetry but to cast the most disgusting abuse on Auden's personal character; what, in Campbell, is stupid prejudice, is editorial irresponsibility in Russell.

The critical articles in *Nine*, and those of its editor in particular, are too often vague, and only rarely of the quality that the editorial policy would lead one to expect; the writers set out with no clear idea about what the limits of their articles are to be, give insufficient evidence for their judgments and lack definition in their critical terms. They often include ancient platitudes of literary history which we should expect, on the principles of *Nine*, to be revalued before they are accepted. We are referred mysteriously to "the root problems of our time", and whimsically to "literature in the best sense". These examples are chosen from Peter Russell's own writing, because I believe his worst faults infect the whole of *Nine*. In what might have been a very good article on Gavin Douglas he achieves little because he attempts too much; in this respect it reflects one of the major inadequacies of *Nine*. His critical laziness, which I have already illustrated, is evident in the choice of articles and verse; too often, a contribution is quite irrelevant to the purposes of *Nine*, the result of

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the personal whims of the author. There is no reason to doubt that *Nine* publishes the best poetry it receives, and some of it is far from contemptible; but no periodical of any worth can afford to be a poetical Hit Parade—it is quite possible that the best may not be good enough. To call the cliché-ridden verse of Owen Barfield and Ralph Houston "traditional", and the unfunny naughtiness of Ronald Duncan "exploratory" is an evasion. Even if it means a smaller poetry section *Nine* must be more rigorous in its selection of verse, since it is on this selection that the effectiveness of its principles will eventually be judged. The review section of *Nine* is its best feature; here, at its best, one can see the intentions of *Nine* in action; this is possibly because of the limitations prescribed by length and by the books under review. If so, it bears out my conviction that what *Nine* lacks is discipline; this is a quality it could have assimilated from Dr. Leavis were it catholic enough to do so.

If I have seemed harsh about *Nine,* it is because an opportunity is being wasted. If *Nine* could learn to implement its declared principles it would be the most considerable literary journal in England today; the very seriousness of its aims demands the kind of criticism I have tried to give. The positive virtues of *Nine* are many; its enthusiasm, the range of its comment, and its courage in publishing at all with any serious purpose.

Scrutiny, unlike the weeklies, unlike *Nine,* is characterized by its absolutely uncompromising attitude towards literature; it conducted a lone campaign during the thirties against dilettantism in all its forms, from Lytton Strachey down to *transition.* It was a counter-blast to a Bloomsbury[3] which regarded literature as a social grace; *Scrutiny* did not find it embarrassing to "care enough about literature to want to give serious work serious consideration"; it did not find Strachey's mockery of Matthew Arnold the least bit amusing.[4] Leavis is not just having fun with literature; his attitude insists that criticism is a discipline and not merely an undemanding pastime. It is worth noting here that even after twenty years of uninterrupted publication, *Scrutiny* and Dr. Leavis command in England nothing like the respect accorded them in the U. S. Perhaps the most valuable feature in the *Scrutiny* of the thirties was that, apart from its longer articles, it kept a constantly vigilant and tolerant eye on the state of contemporary letters; Q. D. Leavis's reviews of new fiction still bear reading after fifteen years. This, in itself, is testimony to the quality of *Scrutiny's* critical principles and practice. But *Scrutiny* has developed very serious limitations.

The vigilance I have mentioned has, in later issues, been relaxed. As a purely critical journal, *Scrutiny* has no equal—but it is incomplete; the power has been generated but it is not being fully utilised; the bearing it has on the contempo-

[3]The faith is brilliantly re-affirmed in *Scrutiny* of June 1951 in two crushing reviews by Leavis: of a biography of Keynes and of Eliot's introduction to a new book on Lawrence.

[4]Strachey is still a name to be reckoned with; he has even been accorded the honour of a uniform edition.

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rary scene is too often, of late, left to be inferred. While we should not expect new creative writing from a journal whose aim is purely critical, we ought to insist that new writing, whatever its merits, be consistently noticed; lately we have had a surfeit of articles on Lawrence and Henry James, but in the last two years or so hardly a review of current fiction. It is not sufficient for *Scrutiny* to deal only with the established; if it does so it must lose relevance. *Scrutiny's* disregard of new fiction implies a conclusion that we are invited to accept undemonstrated; standards applied too rigorously lead to sterility. The same narrowing of outlook is observable in the way some of its reviewers are allowed to dismiss quite mercilessly an otherwise good book for one fault only without even discussing the points the book makes. Derek Traversi's review of A. P. Rossiter's *English Drama* said in effect, "This book is badly written; we'll have none of it". This is not merely intolerance, but a form of critical incompetence.

Scrutiny is falling down on the job, but it remains one of the few hopes for a respectable standard of criticism in England and is still the most powerful journal published here. It cannot afford to rely on its record; if it does it will surely fail. In order to succeed *Scrutiny* must be continually active on the highest possible level and regain its contemporary reference. It is encouraging to find its influence lower down the scale in a quarterly for schools, *The Use of English*, edited by Denys Thompson, an ex-editor of *Scrutiny*.

The object of *Essays in Criticism*, edited from Oxford by F. W. Bateson, is to help form "a bridge between literary history and literary criticism"; its three criteria are that the articles the editors print shall have social relevance, shall avoid the scholarly inadequacies that vitiate modern criticism, and shall take the pre-existing problem one stage further. This magazine is even more limited than *Scrutiny* in its scope; it is exclusively critical and composed entirely of essays. The first issue (Januray 1951), while lacking weight in some particulars, promised well in some of its articles, especially the essay on Arnold by John Holloway and the virtuoso piece on Shakespeare's sonnets by Bateson himself. But *Essays in Criticism* has degenerated since that first number into a mere collection of essays without a binding purpose or contemporary relevance. Good essays there have been, but one cannot say about *Essays in Criticism*, as one has always been able to say about *Scrutiny*, that it is greater than any individual number, than any individual contribution or contributor. Our crying need is for a decent standard of criticism, but *Scrutiny* is far nearer to meeting it than *Essays in Criticism* in its present form can ever be, and how far from success *Scrutiny* is may be judged from what I have written about the weeklies and the miscellanies. The occasional good contribution simply will not solve the problem.

The picture I have painted is not complete, but I think that the incompetence of *Nine*, and the existence of one great critical journal in *Scrutiny* (whatever its current shortcomings) make it an interesting one. The major

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deficiencies of *Nine* are those that *Scrutiny* can supply. I cannot, however, find evidence that English literary periodicals have successfully met our basic need for high standards of criticism; in fact they have either not recognized it or have failed before the vastly stronger opposition of the freemasonry of latter-day Bloomsbury. Even in Cambridge the commonest influence of *Scrutiny* is to be found in the repetition by undergraduates of the opinions of Dr. Leavis. Criticism is something that can be learned and taught and the only way of dealing with the problem effectively is at source, in the university; there, at least, is an audience with the highest potential susceptibility to the claims of serious criticism. Furthermore, only in the university can literary history, without which criticism must lose authority, properly be taught. Certainly there are risks; the restricting academic atmosphere, the tendency of the university to stay remote from contemporary literary events. It may even be argued that just these things are responsible for the decline of *Scrutiny*. The risks must be taken; things cannot be any worse than they are now. There are signs that the problem is being met; L. C. Knights is professor at Sheffield, Bateson is at Oxford, and Leavis at Cambridge; and elsewhere, especially in the provinces, there are teachers not unaware of their responsibility. Perhaps anxiously, perhaps diffidently, we wait for this teaching to take effect, perhaps in the form of new and authoritative periodicals, and meanwhile cling, with reservations, to such straws as *Scrutiny*.

VIVIAN MERCIER

Traduttore—Traditore

THE VAGARIES OF TRANSLATORS NEVER CEASE to amaze me; those of one in particular, Mr. Selden Rodman, I have been studying at intervals over the past few months in a volume entitled *One Hundred Modern Poems*, edited by Mr. Rodman, originally published by Pellegrini and Cudahy, and now made available to a larger and presumably unwary public in the form of a Mentor Book. My researches almost compel me to postulate the existence of two Rodmans: one a fumbling, well-meaning schoolboy with a not-very-good French dictionary of which he does not make very good use; the other a man of letters capable of an intelligent rendering of Valéry's gnomic *Le cimetière marin*. The translation here has been disfigured by faulty proof-reading, allowing "diadem" as the last word of the fourth stanza, where the original and Mr. Rodman's own rhyme-scheme clearly require "disdain". The printers, however, cannot be held responsible for all the blemishes in the other versions, as we shall see.

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In all, Mr. Rodman has translated eight of the twenty-five poems that he includes in the first part of his book under the title "Beyond Frontiers". Six are taken from the French, one from the Italian, one from the German. I propose to mention here only the four French poems whose original texts I happen to have at hand.

The mature and perceptive Rodman takes charge in the apt if free rendering of Aragon's *Complainte pour l'orgue de la Nouvelle Barbarie*; the folk-art simplicity of surface here might well have caught a warier interpreter off guard. Indeed, a somewhat similar primitivism on the surface of the poem, masking a centuries-old sophistication, may be partly responsible for the signal defeat Mr. Rodman suffers in his encounter with Appollinaire's *Zone*. An early line in that poem reads:

Seul en Europe tu n'es pas antique ô Christianisme . . .

but Mr. Rodman never fully takes the hint, never seems to realize just how pervasive the religious symbolism, both Christian and Jewish, remains throughout. To be sure, his unequal struggle with French irregular verbs may be claiming most of his attention, for he translates *le jour où tu t'y vis* (the day you saw yourself there) as "the day you were born", mixing up *vivre* with *voir*; again, he renders *J'ai vécu comme un fou* (I have lived like a fool) as "You have conquered like a fool", confusing *vivre* this time with *vaincre*.

The doctrine of "poetic licence" condones many breaches of the letter if a translator succeeds in capturing the spirit of a poem, but it seems inexcusable that Mr. Rodman should in more than one instance put down the exact opposite of what his original says. For instance, his tenth line begins, "As you enter the church to confess. . ." where the French has explicitly:

. . . la honte te retient
D'entrer dans une église et de t'y confesser . . .

(i.e. shame keeps you from entering a church and confessing there). Again, he translates the line *Comme si tu ne devais jamais plus être aimé* (As if you must never again be loved) thus: "It is as though you had never before been loved".

I have already denied Mr. Rodman's competence to capture the spirit of this poem, particularly with regard to its religious overtones; a few examples are called for. One line he omits altogether:

Ils disent qu'il imite Simon Mage en Judée . . .

I am not sure that the account given in the eighth chapter of *Acts* of Simon Magus, conjuror and inventor of simony, entirely clarifies this line in Apollinaire's context; but that is no justification for omitting the line altogether. Elsewhere, to translate the words *la colombe esprit immaculé* as "the white dove with her spirit immaculate" is to obscure the allusion to a very familiar bit of Christian symbolism; in the third chapter of *Luke*, for instance we read

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that "the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him". A reference to the "Sacred Heart" of "Our Lady" cannot be attributed solely to ignorance, since a careful reading of the French would have helped Mr. Rodman to avoid this egregious blunder.

Frankly, *Zone* is not an easy poem to translate; my criticism of Mr. Rodman hinges on my belief that he has only a dim idea of his own temerity in undertaking a translation. One final quotation will underline the poem's difficulties and his failure to grapple with them. Apollinaire writes:

C'est le fils pâle et vermeil de la douloureuse mère
C'est l'arbre toujours touffu de toutes les prières
C'est la double potence de l'honneur et de l'éternité
C'est l'étoile à six branches

Mr. Rodman renders the passage as follows:

Son of the sorrowing mother pale and vermilion
It is the Tree forever tufted with prayers to the Son
Of honor the double-draft of time the very tick
It is the six-branched candlestick

The first two lines here are good enough; the capital *T* in *Tree* clearly indicates the reference to the Cross. It seems morally certain that Rodman has misunderstood the third line, though. Admittedly, it almost defies translation; all one can be sure of is that the Cross is again in question. The primary meaning of *potence* is "gallows"; it may also mean, among other things, "crutch" or "prop," and "measuring rod, measuring standard" (of the kind one sees in doctors' offices). Perhaps all of these meanings come into play here. Furthermore, the Cross can also be equated with the "six-pointed star" of the fourth line; alternatively, Jesus, a descendant of David, may properly claim the Star of David as his emblem. Since Apollinaire himself breaks away here from his easy-going couplets, there is little excuse for the translator to depart so far from the meaning in search of a rhyme.

Where, one wonders, do people find the nerve to translate Rimbaud? Perhaps in such comforting dogmas as this one, from Mr. Rodman's "Introduction":

> Rimbaud dispensed . . . with grammar and syntax when necessary and with the dictionary meaning of words. . . .

If Mr. Rodman in his turn dispenses with the dictionary meaning of words, he has the best possible warrant for doing so; he can write his own poem, for that matter, though I doubt if he then has the right to call it a translation of Rimbaud's. If Rimbaud's practice is really what Mr. Rodman says it is, no translation is possible.

Let us look at a passage from *Villes* as given in Paterne Berrichon's edition of the *Oeuvres* (*Mercure de France*, 1947):

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> L'acropole officielle outre les conceptions de la barbarie moderne les plus colossales. Impossible d'exprimer le jour mat produit par ce ciel immuablement gris, l'éclat impérial des bâtisses, et la neige éternelle du sol.

Rodman renders this as:

> The official Acropolis is of all the conceptions of modern barbarism the most colossal: indescribable is the unpolished daylight the sky produces, the immovable grey, the imperial radiance of buildings under the sun's eternal snow.

Now, either he is using a notably different text of Rimbaud, or this translation is the work of that bemused schoolboy I spoke of earlier. Passing over his seeming insensitiveness to the rhythms of the original I shall note instead that he twice uses the colorless verb "is", which Rimbaud uses not at all; the first time it replaces the forceful *outre*[1] (meaning "carries to excess", "outrages", "surpasses"), which could never under any circumstances be interpreted as a synonym of *est*. Also, one would hardly suspect, without the French before one, that it is "the sky" which provides "the immovable grey"—that sky which is, in fact, "immutably" or "unalterably" rather than "immovably" grey. If the dictionary meaning of words mattered at all, it might be worth pointing out that the usual French equivalent of "immovable" is *immobile*. But the final phrase of Mr. Rodman's version makes it abundantly clear that he has dispensed once and for all with the dictionary meaning of words, since in any French-English dictionary I have ever consulted the primary meaning of *sol* is "ground" or "earth". One might, of course, ask *which* dictionary meaning Rodman was dispensing with; unfortunately, though *sol* means many things, including the musical note G, one thing it *never* means is "sun". The French, eccentrically enough, have another name for the sun; they call it *le soleil*. Alas for Rimbaud's surrealist image of "the sun's eternal snow"! *Pas si surréaliste que ça.*

Can one say anything about Mr. Rodman as a translator of Apollinaire and Rimbaud without impugning his integrity or his intelligence—or both? A man who could do so good a job on Aragon *must* have known that the other two translations were bad, and have lacked sufficient respect for his readers and himself to revise them with the help of someone who really knew French. Or if, against all appearances, he really does not know what travesties these versions are, then he must be, to say the least, singularly lacking in humility with regard to his own limited powers as a linguist.[2]

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[1]Other editions have *entre*, a somewhat less forceful verb; but the point remains the same.

[2]I am told that Mr. Rodman is not the only or the worst offender among recent translators of French poetry; personally, I shy away from translators of poetry who haven't the guts to print their originals on facing pages.

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RAY B. WEST, JR.

The Unity of *Billy Budd*

MELVILLE'S LAST COMPLETE WORK, *Billy Budd*, was not finished until 1891, the year of Melville's death, and it did not appear in print until 1924. Even then, the first printed version, prepared by Raymond Weaver, was not completely authentic because of the chaotic condition of the manuscript. A final, scholarly transcription was made by F. Barron Freeman in 1948.[1] Freeman's verified version, however, revealed nothing startling in itself. What it did do was indicate the tremendous seriousness with which Melville took the labor of composing his final work, the conscious effort and energy which he expended on it almost up to the last hours of his life. Most important, it removed doubts concerning the finality with which *Billy Budd* could be read critically, for it established a text which we can be reasonably certain represents Melville's final and deliberate intention.

This is important because so much that has been written about this short novel has been tentative and uncertain. In brief, the criticism of *Billy Budd* has represented two points of view. The first is that which sees the work as Melville's "testament of acceptance", without making it in any way clear what that acceptance represented; the second the view that *Billy Budd* is a reflection of its author's final confusion and disappointment, an unnecessarily expanded and wasteful work. Both judgments are, in my opinion, wrong, and their error arises from an original error in reading.

Billy Budd has been seen as an attempt at conventional tragedy, with Billy as tragic hero confronted by the fateful choice between two traditional extremes: order at the expense of justice or justice at the expense of order. Had Billy demanded justice, he would not have accepted Captain Vere's judgment. Not to have accepted the judgment would have represented a denial of the law (and order) upon which the judgment was based. Since order represents a means of controlling evil, the choice of anything else would have represented the triumph of evil (Claggart). Melville has set the whole sequence up cleverly to parallel the crucifixion, so that the incident mirrors Christ's agony and depicts Christ's choice of death in the service of the law. The law is God (Vere). It is absolute. Justice is for Man. Christ (and Billy) as God-Man chose the law and suffered death, for it is only in terms of the law that evil can be defeated. The very concept of justice gives reality to evil—a choosing between the ambiguities of right and wrong. Billy's choice is thus read as

[1] MELVILLE'S BILLY BUDD, ed. *F. Barron Freeman*. Harvard University Press.

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equivalent to Christ's agony and as an indication of Melville's final acceptance of the doctrine of Christian atonement.

Having taken such a position, however, the critic finds himself in difficulty, for what is he to do with the events of the novel which are not concerned directly with Billy's defection and punishment? Billy's career, while representing the central events of the narrative, makes up approximately one-third of the total story, and it is surrounded by events and references dealing with philosophical, political, and aesthetic matters apparantly only distantly related to Billy's personal predicament. The easiest answer to this problem, and the one most frequently given, is merely to suggest that such matters are extraneous: obvious but minor defects in an interesting work, short-comings which Melville, had he lived, would have corrected. The second, and most obvious answer, is to say that such apparent disorder was simply a mirroring of Melville's own confusion and uncertainty and that the work is a failure in consequence of it.

The fallacy of the first position is obvious since the publication of Mr. Freeman's edition of *Billy Budd*, for it shows us that Melville had worked out a shorter version of the tale, entitled *Baby Budd*, in which Billy occupies a dominant position and there is little "digression"; but Mr. Freeman shows also that this version was discarded by its author as unsatisfactory and evidently incomplete. Since Melville worked at the writing of *Billy Budd* for more than two and one-half years, we can consider the work nothing less than the result of his considered and mature deliberation. The fallacy of the second position can be disclosed only by showing that there is no moral equivocation, as Richard Chase calls it, in *Billy Budd* and that the apparent digressions are part and parcel of the total unity of the work.

The initial mistake is to persist in thinking of *Billy Budd* as a tragedy at all. The subject of the novel is adequately suggested in Melville's brief preface, the opening sentence of which reads as follows:

> The year 1797, the year of this narrative, belongs to a period which as every thinker now feels, involved a crisis for Christendom not exceeded in its undetermined momentousness at the time by any other era whereof there is record.

This crisis, of course, represents the events surrounding the revolution in France, and it is significant that Melville apparently saw the events of the mutinies at Spithead and at the Nore as symbolic of the threat to world order posed by the revolution. Any reader of Melville knows that he was greatly concerned with the historic development of mankind and that he saw Christianity as the center of an order which seemed gradually but inevitably to be passing away. It was probably because of this view that he could think of himself only as a nominal, not an orthodox, Christian. Any reader of *Clarel* understands the approximate terms upon which this state of mind was based

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during the later years of Melville's life. Both *Clarel* and *Billy Budd* might have been titled, less imaginatively, "The Crisis of Christendom", with Christendom standing not only for the formal aspects of religion, but for all of the philosophical, political, and moral concerns of Man.

In these terms Billy Budd is Man—Christian man as well as historic man. Though he is presented with obvious simplicity, he contains the ambiguities of all of Melville's heroes from Ahab to The Confidence Man. In Christian terms he is Christ, but with typical Christian ambiguity, he is both the Son of Man and the Son of God. Whence came he? In philosophical and political terms, he sailed first as a common sailor on the *Rights of Man*, but was later impressed aboard his Majesty's warship the *Indomitable*. It is remarkable how little attention critics have paid to the names of these two vessels, as well as to the ship which appears at the end of the story: the French warship *Athéiste*, formerly the *St. Louis*. The contrast between life aboard the *Rights of Man* and that aboard the *Indomitable* is the contrast between the Lockean and the Hobbesian points of view. The order of the first is that imposed by Billy's primitive innocence: the common-sense example of good backed up by physical force when necessary. The *Indomitable* is ruled by a concept of absolute order imposed by authority and depending upon fealty to the source of legislated power. Historically, however, it is the distinction between primitive society (which, of course, Melville knew well and at first hand) and the era of what he called "citified man". Theologically, it is the contrast of pagan and Christian order.

Freeman presents evidence to show that at one point Melville considered naming the *Indomitable*, the *Bellipotente*. Such a title must have seemed to him finally too inclusive, too pointedly aimed at the religious level of his tale. Nevertheless, the religious level is primary during the period of Billy's difficulties aboard the second ship, and the parallel of Billy's execution for technical mutiny and the crucifixion have been clearly and commonly seen. Christ's godlike innocence is mirrored in Billy's natural innocence; Christ's humanity in Billy's natural (physical) defect of speech; Christ's agony in submitting to the Will of Heaven in Billy's submission to the authority of Captain Vere. Captain Vere's exclamation following the death of Claggart (the naturally depraved) by the hand of Billy—"Struck dead by an angel of God. Yet the Angel must hang!"—reflects the paradox of atonement by which Christ suffered the agony of death in order to release mankind from the bondage of evil.

It is clear that Melville saw the idea of the Fall and the Atonement as an accurate image of man's predicament (See *Clarel*, XV, 249, *The Works of Herman Melville*, 1924); this level of *Billy Budd* is the one with which critics have primarily concerned themselves. What is important is that Melville held it *as image*, not as orthodox religion. As such it was nearer an aesthetic than a theological concept. This is important, because it follows that the crucifixion

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becomes tragedy, mirroring man's incompleteness; the victory over evil is transient and incomplete. Such a view is expressed in the Christ-like aspect of Ahab in *Moby Dick*. Whereas in *Moby Dick*, however, we have the tragic view expressed directly, in *Billy Budd* it is merely reflected as parable. Melville had written in *Clarel*:

> *Historic memory goes so far*
> *Backward through the long defiles of doom;*
> *Whoso consults it honestly*
> *That mind grows prescient in degree;*
> *For man, like God, abides the same*
> *Always.* (XV, p. 248)

In *Billy Budd* Melville is merely consulting "historic memory", and what he discovers is that man and God are always the same. Billy is budding man, yet he is also the budding God. As primitive man Billy lives at comparative ease with his shipmates aboard the *Rights of Man*—a society similar to that pictured in *Typee*. Transferred, however, to the *Indomitable*—emerging into the era of citified man, he has left nature behind him, except as he himself represents it aboard the second vessel. As a representative of nature, he does the *natural* thing, strikes out at the evil with which he is confronted. It is Claggart's eloquence (the ability to make a fair case for an evil cause) which is the mark of his duplicity. The mark of primitive man is his completeness, his oneness with nature; but he lacks eloquence, he depends upon intuition and action. Citified man faces nature, as John Crowe Ransom has stated handsomely in a recent article, "in guilt and fear toward that Nature who no longer contained him but indifferently confronted him." Melville has Captain Vere say, after acknowledging that Billy's action was no more than "natural": "But do these buttons that we wear attest that our allegiance is to Nature? No, to the King."

The question I take it Melville is raising here is this: If the King's authority is gone, and Nature's, what then supports us? Billy dies for his impulsive act with a prayer for Captain Vere (*vir*—man) upon his lips. A little later the *Indomitable* meets up with the French warship *Athéiste* (formerly the King's ship, the *St. Louis*) and engages her. The *Indomitable* survives the engagement, sinking the *Athéiste*, but Captain Vere, who is also the old god, perhaps even the father of Billy, dies with Billy's name upon his lips, not, as Melville says, "in accents of remorse", but as though transferring his authority to his son: Billy the Son of God and the Son of Man; God become Man and Man become God.

It seems clear that this is Melville's view of the crucifixion—the old God superseded by the new; God as myth. The story of Billy Budd then represents the origin of myth, myth which mirrors man's tragic situation; but is not an attempt at tragedy itself. It is set in a period which represents, in Melville's words, "a crisis for Christendom", a period in which atheism is averted but

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which has only (possibly) in the story of Billy Budd brought forth a new myth to replace it. *Billy Budd* is to be seen, then, somewhat as prophecy, or as an expression of faith. Such an idea had been expressed earlier in *Clarel*:

> *. . . the gods are gone.*
> *Tully scarce dreamed they could be won*
> *Back into credance; less that earth*
> *Ever could know yet mightier birth*
> *Of Deity. He died. Christ came.*
> *And, in due hour, that impious Rome,*
> *Emerging from vast wreck and shame,*
> *Held the forefront of Christendom.*
> *The inference? The lesson?—come:*
> *Let fools count on faith's closing knell—*
> *Time, God, are inexhaustible.*
>
> (*XIV, pp.* 128-129)

Billy Budd is an example of how the new birth will come, winning for mankind a unity such as they knew under Christianity, under the gods of antiquity, or in their primitive innocence. Is this too optimistic a view? Melville's last years have been seen as full of darkness and despair. He himself said of these years that he was neither optimist nor pessimist, nevertheless he relished the pessimism of Thomson's *City of Dreadful Night*, "if for nothing else than as a counterpoise to the exorbitant hopefulness, juvenile and shallow, that makes such a bluster in these days—at least in some quarters." If he was optimistic, then, at least it was not the kind of optimism which he recognized "in some quarters."

If the subject of *Billy Budd* is, as we suggest, the renewal of myth, is it Melville's intention to imply that we are simply awaiting the arrival of a new Messiah? In one sense, yes. We must not assume, as did Tully, that since the old gods are gone no new ones will arise to perform the unification performed by the old. On the other hand, Melville is quite specific about a certain danger—the danger of following false gods; and he is equally specific about the method whereby he believes the new will be enabled to arise. It is this which the critics of *Billy Budd* have heretofore failed to see in those passages which they have labeled extraneous.

Let us begin first with the danger. I have said that the victim of Billy's natural wrath, Claggart, clothed his duplicity by a fairness of appearance which included his ability to speak falsehood under the appearance of truth. Undisguised truth (which is what Billy's innocence represents) is hateful because antipodal to evil. Billy is budding man—primitive man: John Locke's *tabula rasa*. Claggart is the Hobbesian man in whom cunning and intelligence have been substituted for brute force. Mythical man (or Captain Vere) stands squarely between these two opposing concepts. He is intelligent but dreamy—sometimes known as "Starry" Vere. He wears the authority of his office openly

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and plainly, as did Lord Nelson, who insisted upon wearing the scarlet and gold-braid even in the midst of battle. The life of Vere (and Nelson) is open to scrutiny, and upon a certain level it is reflected in the beauty of their vessels, the ornaments of their office, the attractions of ceremony, and the eloquence of their commands. Upon another level, however, such ornaments only served to mask the ugly injustices afflicting the common sailors under their command. Here is Melville's dilemma, and the dilemma which supplies the dramatic framework for his tale. If we correct the injustices in the name of humanity, do we not also commit ourselves to the giving up of all of those beauties which the old order had cherished? Yes, Melville finally concedes, we do. We exchange Nelson's ornate dress for drab, because in calling attention to himself, Nelson endangered the lives of those under him. We relinquish the ceremony of authority, because to delay weighing anchor as Nelson did was dangerous and impractical in a world where ceremony is no longer observed. We surrender the grand lines of Nelson's flagship *Victory* to the more functional and less beautiful design of the *Monitor*. Yet we do not accede to the demands of revolution—atheism. We have come full circle, but only in the sense that pagan civilization had come full circle at the time of Tully. We are faced with what Melville, in *Clarel*, had called "civil barbarism": "Man disennobled—brutalized/ By popular science—atheized/ Into a smatterer" (XV, p. 250).

We then are faced by the same danger which Captain Vere faced in his engagement with the *Athéiste*: civil barbarism. The *Athéiste* is, significantly, not a vessel in its own right, but one merely captured and renamed. The question of identity here is related to Melville's concept of truth and reality. Atheism, which was the product of popular science, was doomed simply because it did not express truth and reality. Captain Vere was doomed, but for an entirely different reason ("The gods are gone"); the *Indomitable* survived both the *St. Louis* and the *Athéiste*, but the implication is clear that the crisis is one merely of discovering a new captain. Melville's attitude toward popular science is further clarified in an ironic passage labeled "A Digression", which occurs in the narrative just after Billy's death. The Purser and the ship's Surgeon are discussing what everyone had considered the remarkable nature of Billy's dying. The Purser suggested that will-power might have been responsible for the absence of the usual physical manifestations, but the Surgeon ridicules such an idea, saying it is no more attributable to will-power than to horsepower. He admits that the event was phenomenal only "in the sense that it was an appearance the cause of which is not immediately to be assigned." The Purser then suggests euthanasia. "*Euthanasia*", the Surgeon replies, "is something like your *will-power;* I doubt its authenticity as a scientific term. . . . It is at once imaginative and metaphysical,—in short, Greek."

It seems clear that if Melville was optimistic it was not with the arrogant optimism of Nineteenth Century science. This is further indicated in the report of Billy's death supplied by a writer of popular prose, the reporter of

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News from the Mediterranean; here (as with the Surgeon) the truth is hidden beneath a false appearance of truth. If Claggart represents malicious evil (natural depravity), the Surgeon represents the evil of ignorance, while the popular reporter, pretending to serve constituted authority, tells the grossest falsehood of all. All are forms of dissimulation—the dangers confronting modern man in his search for truth. Where then does truth lie?

The answer, of course, is inherent in the novel itself. As is so often the case, however, Melville had considered the problem explicitly in *Clarel*:

> *Suppose an instituted creed*
> *(or truth or fable) should indeed*
> *To ashes fall; the spirit exhales,*
> *But reinfunds in active forms:*
> *Verse, popular verse, it charms or warms—*
> *Bellies philosophy's flattened sails—*
> *Tinctures the very book, perchance,*
> *Which claims arrest of its advance.*
> (XV, p. 105)

Here is an almost exact duplication of the situation in *Billy Budd*. Christianity and all it implies has fallen into decay. The spirit exhales, but only momentarily, awaiting the propitious moment again to belly philosophy's sails. Billy's act of innocent heroism supplies the opportunity—creates the situation. Authoritarianism and a changing concept of man's individual worth had conspired to bring about the destruction of the old gods. Billy's act (and by extension, Christ's) is seen more as tragic circumstance than as actual atonement. From Billy's act then springs the new myth, sung to the tune of a simple sailors' ballad. It is "verse, popular verse" which bellies the sails, which supplies the common man with a means of confronting the facts, not only of Billy's death, but of his own. It is not orthodox Christianity. It is not popular science. It is the simple creative act which pierces the mask of falsehood and error, which sees man's existence as an heroic submission to fate, but which is in constant rebellion against those forms which result in man's injustice to man.

If it seems odd that so apparent and so integrated a theme should have been missed by so many readers, the fact of its having been missed is only additional evidence of the difficulty which the modern reader has with the ironic style in which *Billy Budd* is composed. The difficulty is multiplied in this case, because Melville did not employ (indeed, could not have employed) the lyric-ironic style of *Moby Dick*, to which we have, after a lapse of many years, become accustomed. Accompanying the positive theme of man's rejuvenation through myth, there is also, as we have indicated, the negative one of modern man's situation in an over-materialistic society: "atheized into a smatterer". In a satiric-ironic manner, Melville pretends to adopt the very style of the popular-prose writer against whom his book is at least partially directed. Despite the fact that his central theme betrays his principal intention—he had elsewhere

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written, "It is not the purpose of literature to purvey news",—he pretended to have written a story which, as he says, "has less to do with fable than with fact". He speaks of digressions and ragged edges, as though the very essence of truth lay in its absence of form. He pretends, in other words, to have written the very book which claims arrest of the advance of truth, or fable, or of instituted creeds; but the theme itself, the form which he has created in *Billy Budd*, tinctures the very book which he pretends to have written—the book of factual information concerning a mutiny at sea.

Contrary to current critical opinion, then, *Billy Budd* as a unified work not only is not marred by digressions and irrelevancies, it is a triumph of architectonic structure. When Melville protests that as a writer of "facts" he is prevented from achieving "an architectural finial", he is merely calling attention (in a method not uncommon in literature) to his central theme, which is in fact presented as an architectural finial, since it lies imbedded in the popular ballad "Billy in the Darbies", which ends the book.

But they'll lash me in hammock, drop me deep.
Fathoms down, fathoms down, how I'll dream fast asleep.
I feel it stealing now. Sentry, are you there?
Just ease these darbies at the wrist,
And roll me over fair.
I am sleepy, and the oozy weeds about me twist.

This is not great poetry, but it was not intended to be. Neither is it, as one critic calls it, doggerel. It is intended merely to represent the primitive, but universal, ability of man to temper the harsh facts of death, to come to terms with nature, through art. It represents Melville's final expression of faith in mankind—faith in the ability of the common man to see beyond the misrepresentations of evil, however disguised; faith that the essential beauty and heroism of man will always be recognized and celebrated in artistic form, however crude.

Billy Budd is not in itself a tragedy, although it is an expression of belief in the tragic predicament of man. If we need distinguish it by supplying a name, I would suggest that it be called satiric-allegory. It does not pretend to the organ voice of *Moby Dick*. It combines the biting irony of Swiftian satire with the lyric hopefulness of John Bunyan. That it has been so little understood need not finally surprise us when we consider the history of Melville's literary career from *Mardi* onward. Among other things, *Billy Budd* suggests the possibility that Melville believed the rich tongue of Shakespeare (the use of which he borrowed in *Moby Dick* and *Pierre*) to be as obsolete as the scarlet and gold of Lord Nelson's office. Perhaps this is why he chose to write otherwise in his final work.

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Reviews

JOSEPH FRANK

Neo-Classicism and the French Novel[1]

MARTIN TURNELL'S BOOK ON THE FRENCH NOVEL is an interesting work, but not always for reasons that are critically laudable. It is interesting, for one thing, because Mr. Turnell's critical perspective shows what may happen when an English critic, nurtured on T. S. Eliot, undertakes the study of French literature. Eliot himself, before the first World War, was influenced by the small flurry of French neo-classicism associated with the names of Charles Maurras and Pierre Lasserre; they had formed the anti-Romantic thinking of Eliot's mentor, Irving Babbitt, and Eliot knew Maurras personally during his stay in Paris. This group, however, was only a stagnant backwater in the main stream of modern French literature. Their influence at the present time is non-existent, and even during their heyday the works produced under their patronage bore little resemblance to their critical theories. But Eliot used some of their ideas to revolutionize the accepted standards of English literary taste, and Mr. Turnell, coming from this English context, now evaluates the French by criteria that are *plus royaliste que le roi*—or, to shift the terms a bit, more classical than the French themselves.

French critics have long since managed to reconcile themselves with their own Romantic movement. Indeed, the best of the modern French writers have all gone to school with Surrealism—a literary ideology that is nothing if not, as Herbert Read has written, "a reaffirmation of the Romantic principle." Nonetheless, with true British stubbornness, Mr. Turnell doggedly wrote in his earlier book, *The Classical Moment*, that "the Romantic Movement in France has seemed to many good critics to have been a betrayal of the French tradition"; and there is no doubt that Mr. Turnell ranges himself among these "good critics." If there were any doubt, it would be dissipated by the passages in *The Novel in France* where Mr. Turnell boldly takes it on himself to instruct Emile Faguet in the mysteries of the French tradition. Faguet had remarked that the style of Benjamin Constant, one of Mr. Turnell's favorites, lacked the melancholy lyricism of Chateaubriand, and Mr. Turnell snaps back that "instead

[1]THE NOVEL IN FRANCE, by *Martin Turnell*. New Directions. $4.25. LETTERS OF GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, translated and selected by *Richard Rumbold* and *J. M. Cohen*. The Philosophical Library. $3.75.

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of writing a poetical prose in the manner of the Romantics with their large and blurred effects, Constant confines himself strictly to the prose use of language. His genius, like Racine's, is the genius of the French language. In English and German literature there is often an unanalyzed residue in the feelings presented. We are conscious of intimate stresses and frustrations beating behind a wall of words, and this makes a whole poem or a whole novel vague and blurred. In Constant's prose there is no vagueness and no blur." The upshot of all this is that Mr. Turnell displays as pretty a set of critical prejudices—we can call them nothing else, since they are simply taken for granted—as the most crotchety French defender of the *ancien régime* in art and politics. And one ends up by feeling that Mr. Turnell's neo-classicism, like theirs, is itself nothing but an expression of that most Romantic of all modern sentiments: nostalgia.

Despite the apparent casualness of Mr. Turnell's manner, which sometimes degenerates into careless inconsistency,[1] his book is actually based on a rigid historical thesis. "The moralists and novelists of the seventeenth century" Mr. Turnell writes, "shared a profound belief in Rational Man." This means that "their work was an attempt to control the disturbing impulses which Constant was later to describe as *impressions primitives et fougueuses*, and to help man to live a reasonable life by providing him with a series of well-tried moral maxims." In other words, Mr. Turnell conceives of French classical literature as exercising what Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More called the "inner check," and he applies this standard with an insensitive rigor that even Babbitt himself might have envied. Not only does he censure the "shamelessness" of Racine's "abandoned" heroines in his book on the French drama, but he also decides that Racine's typical tragic conflict, when compared with that of Corneille, "ends in the reversal of all moral values."

Under the jaunty sophistication of his manner then, Mr. Turnell is a good bit of a Philistine. He considers the triumph of passion—or indeed, of fatality in any form—as a symptom of moral degeneration, and he is deeply disturbed if he cannot convince himself that the writer shares this view. Any intimation that certain tragic conflicts cannot be resolved so as "to help man to live a reasonable life" seems to him profoundly immoral; it undermines that "belief in life" that Mr. Turnell always produces as his ultimate criterion. Just what a "belief in life" entails is never clearly defined, and it is more than likely that Mr. Turnell would be hard put to give a lucid explanation; but it is evident, in any case, that he has no stomach for tragedy. He admires Stendhal, and thinks that Julien Sorel has "immense force of character"—a view that I think confuses character with energy and ambition—largely because Stendhal never strikes the true tragic note. And while recognizing the narrowness of Corneille's

[1]Example: On p. 145 "Stendhal's characters are the direct product of their age and are only comprehensible when seen in relation to it." On p. 208 "His [Stendhal's] characters represent positive standards by which society is tested and condemned. It is because they stand outside the nineteenth century that they are closer to us than Flaubert's *ratés*."

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psychology, Mr. Turnell constantly appeals to him as a touchstone by which to evaluate the moral worth of other writers. It is the Corneille character—the character whose moral will triumphs over all obstacles, including the obstacle of every natural human feeling—that is always in the back of Mr. Turnell's mind as illustrating a "belief in life." But it has been recognized at least since the time of Aristotle that the greatest literature helps man to live even when, or rather precisely because, it relentlessly portrays the irremediable; and Mr. Turnell's unwillingness to face up to this uncomfortable fact seriously limits the range and quality of his criticism.

In the eighteenth century, according to Mr. Turnell, Rational Man was replaced by the Man of Feeling. This was largely the work of Rousseau, and Mr. Turnell is broad-minded enough to concede that "his novels provided a release for feelings which had been excluded." But poor Rousseau, to be sure, committed the unforgivable sin in Mr. Turnell's critical catechism: he "sacrificed that clarity for which the eighteenth century is justly famous." And in addition, "he did not possess the insight necessary to disentangle the complexities of experience or the classic writer's power of translating obscure feelings into exact language." What is interesting is not Mr. Turnell's opinion on Rousseau's novels; we can agree that, to a modern taste, their sentiment is hardly palatable. Rather, it is the bland assumption running through the book that the function of the novel is to "translate obscure feelings into exact language," and that the existence of what Mr. Turnell calls an "unanalyzed residue" of feelings is sufficient for an adverse judgment.

It never occurs to Mr. Turnell that there might be other standards by which to judge literature—particularly the novel—and that it is more than a little incongruous to criticize Balzac and Flaubert for not writing like Mme. de Lafayette and Stendhal. For this, in the end, is what Mr. Turnell's strictures on these former writers very often amount to. One had imagined that if criticism had learned anything since the Romantic Revolution, it would have been to forego this kind of dogmatic arrogance. The anti-Romantic reaction in English literature, however, has brought back with it a new dogmatism on the part of some critics—not, it should be noted, on the part of T. S. Eliot himself, the heart of the whole movement. But F. R. Leavis, whose influence Mr. Turnell has acknowledged, finds it increasingly difficult to distinguish between the fallibility of his opinions as a mere mortal and the eternal verity of his critical pronouncements when, speaking *ex cathedra*, he incarnates the Great Tradition. It is unfortunate that Mr. Turnell seems more under the sway of Mr. Leavis's dogmatism than of Mr. Eliot's suppleness and flexibility.

Among the French novelists whom Mr. Turnell finds most satisfactory, Benjamin Constant and Stendhal take a prominent place. They represent for him the dialectical reconciliation (though Mr. Turnell would probably flinch at this phrase) between the Rational Man and the Man of Feeling: they retain the penetration and sobriety of the French classical style, and admit only so

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much of the new Romantic psychology as Mr. Turnell's well-bred English sensibilities can tolerate. Coming as they did in an "intermediate period", between the petering out of the French classical tradition and the definitive triumph of Romanticism, they were "free to use what seemed valuable in the classical tradition and to create new patterns of feeling." No doubt this is the correct view to take of these writers, and Mr. Turnell's admiration is certainly not misplaced; but he cannot resist the temptation to overstate the case in their favor.

The French *roman d'analyse,* from Mme. de Lafayette to Raymond Radiguet, is written essentially in the form of a memoir. The subject of the novel is not dramatized: the writer tells the reader about the events taking place and makes only a minimum effort to create the events dramatically through the expressive power of language. This dramatic creation was the work of Balzac and Flaubert, and accounts for their immense influence on the modern novel. But Mr. Turnell, against the plain meaning of the words themselves, tries to read this dramatic expressiveness into the classical style.

He quotes, for example, this precise, analytical sentence from Stendhal: "Dès qu'on déplaisit à Mlle. de la Mole, elle savait punir par une plaisanterie si bien mesurée, si bien choisie, si convenable en apparence, lancée si a propos, que la blessure croissait à chaque instant, plus on y réfléchissait."[2] For Mr. Turnell, these simple words take on an alarmingly nightmarish quality. "The wound is an internal one" he remarks. "We have a sense of the blood slowly seeping through the victim's clothing, and when we come to 'plus on y réfléchissait' we feel him suddenly crumple up. I think that we can say that the effect of sentences like these is that of an underwater explosion." I think *we* can say that Mr. Turnell has an "unanalyzed residue of feeling" that he is projecting into Stendhal's epigrammatic phrase, and that—as T. S. Eliot noted long ago, in his essay on "Perfect and Imperfect Critics"—this is a far graver defect for a critic than for a novelist or a poet.

"With the nineteenth century proper" Mr. Turnell tells us, "we are on debatable ground." What this means is that Mr. Turnell has difficulty in extending his historical thesis to cover the developments after Stendhal. Since perfection has been reached in Stendhal and Constant, it is clear that only decadence can follow; but Mr. Turnell is embarrassed to explain how and why. And so he turns for support to Jacques Rivière, the influential French critic and novelist, who tried to revive the tradition of the French *roman d'analyse* in the Twenties by launching a critical attack on Naturalism. From Stendhal onwards, Rivière claimed, there had set in a "continuous degradation of our ancient, inveterate faculty of understanding and rendering feeling." Not that Flaubert's major works showed "no knowledge of the human heart"; but they

[2] "Whenever anyone displeased Mlle. de la Mole, she knew how to punish by a witticism so calculated, so well chosen, apparently so harmless, so aptly launched, that the wound grew at each moment, the more one thought about it."

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do not reveal "the slightest sign of a direct view into its complexity"; they do not carry us "a step further in our knowledge of it or give us a frontal view of fresh aspects." Certainly—but then, neither Balzac nor Flaubert was interested in giving us a direct view of the human heart; they wished to explore its relations with nature and society. And the same answer may be made to Mr. Turnell's efforts to prove that the language of Balzac and Flaubert "reveals a fatal imprecision." The language of Balzac and Flaubert is descriptive rather than analytical, and it is absurd to set up one of these styles as the standard by which the other should be judged.

Consequently, the best essays in the present book are those on writers like Mme. de Lafayette, Choderlos de Laclos and Benjamin Constant—writers on whom little or nothing has been written in English, and for whom Mr. Turnell has a genuine admiration. One can, of course, quarrel with this or that point of interpretation. I think that Mr. Turnell tends to read these books a little too much as historical documents, and to assume that the meaning that interests him is also the dominant emphasis in the work itself. *La Princesse de Clèves*, for example, may well be seen historically to indicate a weakening of the moral values that the Princess represents; she is certainly far less self-assured than a Corneille heroine; but it is not true, as Mr. Turnell tries to prove, that Mme. de Lafayette is criticizing these values herself. There is not a word to justify this view in the book, which, on the contrary, holds up the Princess as a model of virtue in the midst of the general libertinage of the court. Mr. Turnell makes the same error when he tells us that *Adolphe* shows "the dilemma of the sensitive person in a corrupt society," and that the hero's vacillation "records the disintegration of the individual in a hostile environment." No doubt Adolphe shares this conflict with all the heroes of the Romantic period, but Mr. Turnell hardly brings out the special quality of Adolphe's experience by stating the theme in this way. Since Mr. Turnell sticks mainly to textual analysis, however, these misplacements of accent are only minor failings in what are otherwise lucid and instructive pages.

On Balzac and Flaubert, for reasons that should now be clear, Mr. Turnell is simply wrong-headed and irrelevant. Not that these writers are immune to criticism; but Mr. Turnell never makes the slightest effort to understand them in their own terms; and with a critical naiveté only equalled by his self-assurance, he judges them as if they were unsuccessfully trying to write *romans d'analyse*. Balzac, as Mr. Turnell claims, may not have been "an outstandingly intelligent man," but he had enough good sense, in his essay on *La Chartreuse de Parme*, to draw a distinction between a *littérature des idées* and a *littérature des images*—and to realize that both had their virtues and their defects. For all his own intelligence, Mr. Turnell is apparently incapable of performing a similar mental feat. Besides, Mr. Turnell's Philistinism comes out at its crudest in his peroration on Flaubert's "nihilism," and in the unbelievably obtuse assertion that

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Madame Bovary "is an onslaught on the whole basis of human feeling and on all spiritual and moral values."

On Stendhal and Proust, Mr. Turnell is competent but mediocre: there are studies of both these writers in English far superior to what Mr. Turnell has to offer. Anyone wanting to read about Stendhal would do much better to turn to Joseph Wood Krutch's essay in *Five Masters* (an unjustly neglected book), or to F. C. Green's longer study; and Edmund Wilson's essay on Proust in *Axel's Castle*, as well as recent works by André Maurois, Harold March and F. C. Green again, are far preferable to Mr. Turnell's perfunctory and badly organized pages. Nor does Mr. Turnell's admiration for Stendhal prevent him from misreading the end of *Le Rouge et Le Noir*. Julien Sorel, he tells us, blocks all the efforts to save him from execution because "when Julien reaches the prison . . . his sensibility is exhausted." Yet when Julien gets up to make the defiant speech that causes the jury to condemn him, even though it had previously been bribed, we read that "il se sentit enflammé par l'idée du devoir" —he felt inspired by a sense of duty. And the duty he owed himself, as he explains in the first line of his speech, was to free himself from "l'horreur du mépris," the horror of the contempt that the "bourgeois indignés" on the jury might feel because he had asked them for favors. This is not the attitude of a man who has relapsed into quiescence, and for whom "the prison itself [is] a symbol of the womb to which he wishes to return."

In this last sentence, we have a good example of Mr. Turnell's remorseless and frequently comic hunt for concealed symbols, which all too often takes the place of a firm grasp on structure and meaning. When a dog dashes into the prison of Fabrice del Dongo in *La Chartreuse de Parme* and begins to kill rats, Mr. Turnell is capable of writing with a straight face: "The rats are an emanation from the underworld, the dog a sign of vigilance—of the despot watching over his prisoner and the vigilance of Fabrice's friends protecting him from danger, killing the rats as they defeat the attempt to poison him." And the famous headgear that Charles Bovary wears on his first appearance in *Madame Bovary* becomes something rich and strange as Mr. Turnell embroiders on the wealth of hidden symbolism in "the five different kinds of military and civilian headdress mentioned." For "the catalogue, which begins with a busby and ends with a nightcap, is clearly arranged in descending order and points to the moral and material decline of father and son." (Oh that nightcap!). If this is a sample of the "close" criticism of the novel we have heard about recently, I must say that I emphatically prefer the old-fashioned kind that made some effort to give an accurate account of what a book was about.

It was with a feeling of great relief that I turned to Flaubert's letters after reading Martin Turnell. For there was, at least for me, something grating and irritating, something niggardly and small-souled, in Mr. Turnell's blindly obstinate incomprehension of all those forms of literary and spiritual experience

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that did not fit within his narrow categories. How different with the "nihilist" Flaubert! What impresses one in reading this selection from his letters—a fair sampling, and well-translated—is the breadth of his humanity, his ability to cut beneath "ideas" and "opinions" to the rich human substance, the rare human value of the people with whom he came into contact. So that, while disagreeing with George Sand on every subject under the sun, including the subject to which he dedicated his life—literature—Flaubert could still write her: "What a proud creature you are, and what a capacious heart you have!" Anyone reading these letters, and still more the nine-volume French edition in the *Oeuvres Complètes*, is certain to apply these remarks to Flaubert himself.

Albert Thibaudet, in his excellent history of French literature since the Revolution, has called Flaubert's letters probably "the most important correspondence of a man of letters in the nineteenth century." Whether one agrees with this or not, there is no doubt that the letters have taken an independent and very important place in French estimates of Flaubert. And it is not difficult to see why André Gide, the self-conscious stylist and fierce iconoclast, should have remarked that Flaubert's letters had for years been his *livre de chevet*—his bedside book. For one finds in these letters the pride and passion of a man for whom art was truly a religion, and in searching for a phrase to characterize them, Thibaudet could find nothing more appropriate than: "a breviary of literary honor." In the famous letter that Flaubert wrote to Maxime Du Camp, rejecting the latter's plea to come to Paris and join in the scramble for reputation and honors (Du Camp, then and later, was to get more than his rightful share), Flaubert stated his credo: "I am aiming at something better, at pleasing myself. To me success appears to be a by-product, not a goal. Now I have been marching on this goal for what seems to me a long time without the slightest deflection; nor have I ever stopped to pay court to ladies by the wayside, or to sleep on the greensward. If it is an illusion I am pursuing, at least I prefer the highest illusions."

Aside from their value as the revelation of a remarkable spirit, these letters are of great help in understanding the universe of Flaubert's novels. It is strange, however, that they have been so little used for this purpose even by the best French critics, not to mention the scanty English literature of any merit on the subject. I do not mean that the letters have not been exploited for whatever information they could offer on the external history of the novels, and all the other secondary—I was going to say irrelevant—matters that scholars are interested in. But I have never come across a critical work that seemed to me to get at the ethical center of Flaubert's work taken as a whole. Yet this center is clearly revealed even in the handful of letters in the present translation; and it is high time that inanities like those of Mr. Turnell were made impossible. This can easily be done, I believe, if one simple fact is kept in mind: along with the Romantic literary influences of his youth, Flaubert was influenced perhaps even more strongly by the ethics of Roman Stoicism, coming

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to him through Montaigne and Spinoza. It is only in terms of these ethical values that Flaubert's life and work takes on any meaning and any unity.

The most profound influence on the young Flaubert was Alfred le Poittevin, who died of tuberculosis when Flaubert was 27 and le Poittevin not much older, leaving behind poems, prose fragments and letters that have since been published by René Descharmes. "So long as it was possible for him to do anything"—Flaubert wrote in a letter to Du Camp, describing le Poittevin's last days—"he was reading Spinoza in bed every night till one in the morning." Fifteen years later, after having published *Madame Bovary* and *Salammbô*, Flaubert wrote to le Poittevin's sister, the mother of Guy de Maupassant: "If there is any good in me, it is to [Alfred] that I owe it." Flaubert shared le Poittevin's literary and intellectual enthusiasms, and years after the latter's death, in writing to another correspondent who had turned to him in a moment of spiritual distress, he advised reading Spinoza: "Perhaps, like Goethe, you will find yourself calmer by reading that great man." It is the Stoic virtues, then, that are the foundations of Flaubert's morality; and once this is realized, the mystery that has been made of his retreat to Croisset, his refusal to marry, and his monkish life in general, dissipates itself. Moreover, it is this strain of Stoicism that has to be kept in mind if we are fully to understand his novels.

If we disregard the surface antagonism between Romanticism and Realism, which has formed the staple of Flaubert criticism up to the present time, we can see that all of Flaubert's works deal with the tragedy of desire. When they are negative, as in *Madame Bovary*, *Salammbô* and *L'Education Sentimentale*, they dwell on man's inability to satisfy desire, whether physical or spiritual; when they are positive, as in *La Tentation de Saint Antoine*, *Un Coeur Simple*, *St. Julien l'Hospitalier*, they portray the conquest of desire through self-discipline and self-abnegation. (*Bouvard et Pecuchet* is a special case: a transposition of this theme into a tragi-comic register. In the ending that Flaubert planned for this book, but which he did not live to write, his two characters attain a fitting serenity; they return to their métier as copyists, but devote themselves to compiling a history of human stupidity). This grouping, as can be seen, cuts across the usual one between novels dealing with modern life and those choosing a subject from history—a grouping that has been assimilated to the distinction between Romanticism and Realism. But it is nonsensical to label *Salammbô* a Romantic work, despite its savagely accurate descriptions of physical decay, merely because its setting is historical; while it is equally beside the point to call *Madame Bovary* a Realistic work, despite the epic elevation of its style, merely because it is set in Flaubert's own century.

Endless attempts have been made to fit these categories to the reality of Flaubert's work, to describe the exact amount of Realism in the so-called Romantic books and vice versa; but while these attempts may testify to the honesty of the critic, embarrassed by a complexity he cannot master, they turn out to be of little help to the reader. For they start from the surface rather

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than from the center of Flaubert's work, and, if they are to have any value at all, they must be seen in relation to his central theme: the tragedy of desire. Now all desire, from a Stoic point of view, leads to suffering and despair; it is only the freedom from desire that can bring inner peace. "No, I do not believe that *happiness is possible*," Flaubert wrote in a letter to George Sand; "but tranquillity is." (Italics in text). And it is tranquillity, attained by the acceptance of man's limits, and, so far as possible, by freeing oneself from desire, that is the ethical ideal of Stoicism and of Flaubert as well. This is why Flaubert always writes so movingly of those who, like the Félicité of *Un Coeur Simple*, have achieved tranquillity through abnegation and devotion; and it is one of Mr. Turnell's grossest blunders that, contrary to every critic I have ever read, he considers the award of the prize to the old servant (in the Comices Agricoles scene of *Madame Bovary*) "an attack on the whole life of the French agricultural community." In fact, as has generally been recognized, it is exactly the opposite—the forerunner of *Un Coeur Simple*.

I think that when Flaubert is seen from this point of view, we are enabled to penetrate far more deeply into the inner meaning of his work as a whole. Moreover, this view has the advantage of taking seriously the work that Flaubert himself thought his most important book—*La Tentation de Saint Antoine*. Even if most critics have had enough good taste not to go so far as Mr. Turnell, who thinks *St. Antoine* a book "which can, perhaps, only be discussed at the psychoanalytical level," they have more or less accepted the verdict of Maxime Du Camp and Louis Bouilhet that it was a regrettable Romantic extravaganza. Flaubert knew better, and it is about time that we took him at his word. One of his great problems was to give a positive expression to an essentially negative metaphysico-ethical attitude; this is why *St. Antoine* preoccupied him all his life. And we know that, after completing *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, he planned to write a book about the Spartans at Thermopylae that would no doubt have been a heroic glorification of the ideal of duty. Flaubert's negative works, particularly *Madame Bovary* and *L'Education Sentimentale*, have been of major importance to the development of the modern novel; and we tend to see Flaubert, for this reason, far too exclusively in their terms. But the letters and the other works, when they are read as they should be, add up to a considerably different picture.

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HUGH KENNER

Alice in Empsonland

THE STRUCTURE OF COMPLEX WORDS, by *William Empson.* New Directions. $5.00.

In 1930 WILLIAM EMPSON PUBLISHED a book of criticism which had the unique distinction of reducing the passivity before poetry of hundreds of readers without imposing—or proposing—a single critical judgment of any salience. *Seven Types of Ambiguity* neither altered the genealogy of sensibility, like Eliot's advocacy of the Metaphysicals, nor renovated the criteria of technique, like Pound's studies of Renaissance translators, nor suspended familiar works from new terminological pegs, like Eliot's "serious farce" (Marlowe), "objective correlative" (Hamlet), or "intellect at the tips of the senses" (Marvell). About the only section one is likely to be able to paraphrase some weeks after reading is a digression on Shakespeare commentators; the rest of the book hangs in the mind like the ghost of a brilliant evening's talk, inspiriting because what was discussed is supposed to be undiscussable.

The author was 24. At 29 he published a collection of striking poems, and another book cantering the circuit of five whole works ranging from a Shakespeare sonnet (discussion inconclusive) to *Alice in Wonderland* (analysis excellent). That was sixteen years ago. Since then Mr. Empson has been gestating, amid less showy activities, the present book, in intention a systematic treatise, a work meant to issue in a theory of language abstractly defensible, a landmark of speculative linguistics, applicable in numerous critical and pedagogical situations beyond those tackled in exemplification by the ingenious author. Parts of it will interest many sorts of specialists. Critics may pick up one or two terms, lexicographers some excellent stimulus, annotators various insights, semanticists some controversial bones to gnaw. It is difficult to say who will want the whole of it. The book is disappointing, and its disappointingness illuminates, as could no third success, the principles behind Mr. Empson's influential career. The lamp by which he hunted for a generalized theory of ambiguity illuminated everything to which he held it; the theory, now found, proves to be rather phosphorescent than enlightening.

Despite the symbolic notation or the tone of the opening pages, the organization of the book isn't particularly rigorous. The uniform and conscientiously arid terminology merely gives the appearance of holding together what are in effect disjunct critical essays written over the past fifteen years (two of them, "Timon's Dog" and "Honest in Othello", appeared in a pamphlet published that long ago, and we discover on the very last page that "some way of separat-

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ing out the emotions, implications, personal suggestions and suchlike in our complex words, seeing how they are related, how a learner might pick them up more easily" was engaging the author's attention in 1935). On the other hand the essays, unlike those in *Some Versions of Pastoral*, aren't particularly engaging apart from the theory whose usefulness they are meant to illustrate. It is not that they are spoiled by the theory; the theory remains the most interesting part of the book. There is no sign that the chapters in question—on the *Essay on Criticism*, *The Prelude*, *Paradise Lost*, and four Shakespeare plays—might have been interesting if they had been written differently. What has happened is that Mr. Empson's old exploratory zest in the face of poems and plays has evaporated because he has discovered a shortcut to the answers he sought. He no longer, necktie flying, paces off triangles; he has worked out a table of sines.

What he has actually done is tidy up the concept of Ambiguity, the very vagueness of which lent picaresque zest to the early book. It is characteristic of a new evasiveness about the scope he claims that only in a footnote on p. 103 do we learn that he knows it is old ground that is being ordered, rather than new ground that is being broken. The old ground was canvassed early in the first chapter of *Ambiguity*:

> Thus a word may have several distinct meanings; several meanings connected with one another; several meanings which need one another to complete their meaning; or several meanings which unite together so that the word means one relation or one process.

A poem calls these components of its complex words into explicit play; what Mr. Empson was doing in *Ambiguity* and *Pastoral* was tracing out the lines of interaction in a passage one at a time:

> . . . the words of the poet will, as a rule, be more justly words, what they represent will be more effectively a unit in the mind, than the more numerous words with which I shall imitate their meaning so as to show how it is conveyed.

For old-style paraphrase, that *bête noir*, the "prose sense", which assumes that words are atoms, he substituted multiple paraphrase, a sort of hedonistic calculus, the assumption behind which is that the word-atom can be split into smaller particles, or that the effect of a piece of verse is like the synthetic colours in a magazine reproduction, resolvable into dots of varying sizes but standard hues. The analyst takes the "effect" for granted; he is interested in showing us how it arises. The technique is not one for arriving at evaluations, nor for enforcing evaluations once arrived at. It simply locks poet, poem, language, and reader inside a "communicative situation" and explores the intricacies of that. Suggestively, Mr. Empson's analogy for the fact that the

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good reader can get the effect without doing the analysis is "the way some people can do anagrams at a shot, and feel sure the letters all fit."

In *Complex Words*, therefore, we get an atomic theory of language, with symbols for the components of the atom. Words carry Emotions, and Doctrines. Emotions in words are on the whole perfectly analysable, whether or not they are in life; the opponent in the preliminary pages is the man who cries, "This is inexplicable because it is Pure Emotion", just as in the first book it was the man who attributed the effect of poetry to prose sense plus "Pure Sound". Taking A for the Sense under discussion, the emotive components are: A/1, its main "implication" or "association" or "connotation"; (A), a sense held at the back of the mind, so that A (B) means the sense A secretly bolstered by the sense B; –A, a sense deliberately excluded in a given usage; A+, the sense made "warmer and fuller"; A–, the sense made more astringent; A£1, the first Mood of sense A (a mood conveys the speaker's relation to an audience or context); 'A', the mood conveyed by quotes: either "What *I* call A but *they* don't", or "What *they* call A but *I* don't"; A?, the sense used of oneself under cover of using it of someone else, more commonly –A?: "I am not like that"; and finally A!1, the primary Emotion associated with sense A when all the above have been eliminated: thus the first emotion for sense 1 of *honest* ("not lying") is 1!1, approval.

Doctrines are conveyed in words mainly by what Mr. Empson calls Equations; an Equation ties two senses together and implies that they have an intrinsic connection (A=B). The equations go into four classes: I: Context-meaning implies dictionary-meaning; II: Major sense implies connotation (A=A/1); III: Head-meaning implies context meaning; IV: Neither meaning can be regarded as dominant. The meaning that does the implying in the first three classes tends to be (1) more obvious; (2) less emotive; (3) narrower in range, than the one that gets implied.

These are Mr. Empson's "little bits of machinery"; I list them for the convenience of students, since it is laborious to dig them out of the chat in the first 80 pages. The first thing one notes about them, when illustrations of their use begin to occur, is that witty paraphrase, of the sort in which *Ambiguity* abounded, does their job much better. Referring to the brief table of meanings and implications for Pope's "wit" on page 86, one can work out that one use of the word, 3b+=1a——.1£1, assembles the following parts: Poet or artist (3), acting as judge (b), and on that account admired (+), implies (=) a bright social talker (1) mocking (a) and so giving rise to satirical amusement (—) but still to be valued as one values such talkers (1£1). The Empsonian paraphrase elucidates this use of the word "wit" like a shot: "Even in authoritative writers one must expect a certain puppyishness." It is hard to see what is gained by the symbolic terminology here, except a rhetorical assurance that the components of this complex usage of the word are few and enumerable.

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The second thing one notes is that in the chapters on specific works of art all that the machinery can do is done on the first few pages. The spectrum of a key word—"honest" in *Othello,* "fool" in *Lear,* "dog" in *Timon,* "sense" in *The Prelude*—is displayed, in part by logical analysis, in part by combing the N.E.D. (which receives repeated sententious homage as "the great work"), in part by etymology, and the results are put into symbolic notation. This lexicographic feat once performed—and no one is going to underrate its impressiveness, in a case like "honest" or "sense"—the various uses of the word are extracted from the text in hand and each is shown to correspond to something in the schema. This will seem like a parody to anyone who has worked through one of these chapters, but it is what the chapters amount to, with the parenthetic insights trimmed off. Mr. Empson tells us all he can in his first deployment of the word; the rest reads like a laborious attempt to convince himself—and us—that the machinery of notation is indeed adequate.

If the chapters are dull, it is because the method is wrong for discussing poetry. Long poems deploy a far more complex weight than Mr. Empson appears to suppose. They can't really be reduced to the intricacies of their key-words—it is a little like discussing a motor car solely in terms of the weight borne by its ball-bearings. As a way of showing off the analytic machinery, however, the method succeeds quite well; the machinery is usually adequate, for the words he picks. These are rather blank words, frequently, like Pope's "wit", great puzzles, which derive most of their body from context and tone. Mr. Empson's symbols depend on his supposition that a complex meaning can be resolved into linked senses plus a blend of attitudes and intentions. A/1, (A), and —A are *senses* advanced, reserved, and suppressed. A+ and A— are Ricardian *feelings* (speaker's attitude to topic). A£1, 'A', A?, and A!1 are Ricardian *tones* (speaker's attitude to audience). These latter are ingeniously sorted out; but the sense of "sense" goes virtually uninvestigated. Mr. Empson conceives "sense" mathematically. A sense is like a number, atomic and drastically invariable. A word doesn't pull an image into the matrix of discourse. It posits a sense, to be lit obliquely by attitudes. Naturally, the poetic image gives him trouble, as it always has; but he is cannier than he was in *Ambiguity,* and plays down the trouble by careful choice of cases. Of all the words Mr. Empson discusses, the only ones which carry an image are "fool" in *Lear,* which was troublesome enough to yield a rather flat chapter, and "dog" in *Timon,* where the perspective is forced by a preliminary chapter transforming "dog" from an animal into an epithet packed with complex and shifting attitudes. When Timon says to Alcibiades, "I do wish thou wert a dog", Mr. Empson doesn't talk about dogs but about the "logical puzzle" of railing against mankind. He can live with an image if it is really a gesture. If it is not that, it must be a Ricardian "vehicle" for saying something else, and is so discussed under "Metaphor" (chapter 18).

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To the extent to which poetry concerns itself with the concrete fact, then, Mr. Empson's machinery appears to lose hold of it. He provides notation by which one could discuss a good deal of Pound's *Propertius* and *Mauberley*, for instance, where there is endless play with speech-contexts ("logopoeia"); but one suspects that the word "dead" in *The Waste Land* would give trouble, the word "city" a great deal more, and the "broken Coriolanus" near the end of the poem would wreck the machinery entirely. The feelings in "dead" and "city" are carefully neutralized by Eliot's usage, and the senses are too profound for atomization; only a real city or actual death can contain them.

It is perhaps not an accident, then, that Mr. Empson's most enlightening performance is with Pope's "wit"; in the eighteenth century (the century of rational lexicography, which kept prose sense under control) a social matrix—what the speaker was doing with a word against a background of social usages and implications—was predominant enough to give such analysis a main handle. Similarly, when he is surveying the history of a word like "honest" or "dog" or "sense", it is around the eighteenth century that the grip of his machinery on buried implications is most impressive. One of the finest insights in the book concerns the anthropocentric structure such words assumed with the Restoration. A dog becomes a fellow creature, not a lower animal; the word carries Johnson's attitude to Savage, not Antonio's to Shylock.

Behind this suppressed assumption that words are more the property of speakers than of things, one hears the voice of Humpty Dumpty saying, "When I use a word it means what I want it to—neither more nor less." Mr. Empson's charm has always depended on a sort of Alice-persona: the cool-headed quizzer of semantic monsters, seeking to adequate his understanding to the verdicts of his taste. He comes to poetry with an air of being surrounded by plangent irrationalities which can be shown to be quite orderly at bottom; a characteristic key-word in his earlier books was "absurd". In fact, as he explains in the present book, "What Humpty Dumpty gives is not the 'connotations' but the 'central meaning' and then the reason for the 'connotation'; 'That'll do very well', says Alice, who had the feeling already, as a person of taste, and only wanted the plain sense to fit in." They have to fit in, they have to be shown to be orderly, because the inexplicable has terrors. The motive behind such criticism as is contained in *Seven Types of Abiguity* is not the enlightenment of the reader but the satisfaction of the author: "The object of life, after all", he tells us late in *Ambiguity*, "is not to understand things, but to maintain one's defences and equilibrium and live as well as one can; it is not only maiden aunts who are placed liked this." Hence his usefulness to the sort of academic who does not want poetry to disturb him or change him. Hence the absence of intellectual gymnastics in his second volume of poetry (1940). An equilibrium has been discovered; it consists in contemplating the way your peripheral emotions get entangled with the absurd.

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Hence, too, his very curious tastes, and tone, and blindnesses. His real focus of interest has always been Alice's nineteenth century. It is surely no accident that his finest piece of sustained writing is his exegesis of *Alice*. Like Lewis Carroll, he maintains a mathematical self (he started in mathematics at Cambridge) which is always trying to tidy up the decayed fish carried into the kitchen by the "sensitive" self. The analytic machinery is a Carrollean invention, too complex for the uses to which it is suited, like the "Nyctograph" Carroll invented for taking notes in the dark, and tried, naively, to put on sale. We are told in the preface to the revised *Ambiguity* that one of the motives of composition was a desire to get Swinburnean plangencies into stereoscopic focus with rediscovered Wit. Nothing, for Mr. Empson, has happened in poetry since the nineteenth century, except rounder and defter examples of the same thing. Eliot is the only contemporary poet he has tackled, and then only Eliot reverberating amid Victorian submarine darkness: the dressing-table scene in *The Waste Land*, the leaning creatures in *Whispers of Immortality*. He finds *Finnegans Wake* "a gigantic corpse", essentially because you can't tell, in a Joycean compound, which of the meanings is primary: this is the howl of the machine striking granite. He is unexpectedly old-fashioned, again, in finding "very little for anybody to add to A. C. Bradley's magnificent analysis" of *Othello*, except a few alterations of proportion, and he spends pages rationalizing the character of Iago. We must pretend that these are real people; we cannot afford to be cut loose in a universe of poetry, *lo spettatore nel centro del quadro*. We are aware, however, that it is a pretense; the play is "really" a group of effects hinging on how people at a given point in history would take the meaning of a tricky word like "honest": "The character is only made plausible by puns on one word . . . all the elements of the character are represented in the range of meanings of 'honest', and (what is more important) the confusion of moral theory in the audience . . . was symbolised or echoed in a high degree by the confusion of the word."

That he pushes discussion of a complex poetic work back into a discussion of writer-audience relations is, though it has a specious validity for drama, fundamentally indicative of Mr. Empson's attitude to poetry in general. His own early poems are full of images derived from exploration of interstellar space, "That network without fish, that mere / Extended idleness, those pointless places". Language is a kind of heliographic signalling, a faint and desperate attempt to stretch filaments from monad to monad. Style is narcissistic, like Alice's poise; a kind of pathetic elegance in manipulating the inconsequential; it is as if a cockroach should wave his feelers with an air.

His gleaming bubble between void and void,
Tribe-membrane, that by mutual tension stands,
Earth's surface film, is at a breath destroyed.

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Hence "All styles can come down to noise", and language is a collection of devices whereby we are perpetually well-deceived.

All these huge dreams by which men long live well
Are magic-lanterned on the smoke of hell;
This then is real, I have implied,
A painted, small, transparent slide.

Literary criticism switches its attention to and fro between slide and projected image. The slide is a lie and the image an illusion; but critic and reader can conspire with the brave writer to "Feign then what's by a decent tact believed":

Imagine, then, by miracle, with me,
(Ambiguous gifts, as what gods give must be)
What could not possibly be there,
And learn a style from a despair.

So it is with words like "quite" and "honest" that Mr. Empson succeeds most impressively; the special flavours of these words ("Quite a nice time"; "Really, that is scarcely honest") are part of the machinery by which maiden aunts bear up; they are flourishes with the sword of the human creature, his back to the wall, antagonized by a shadow. The colloquial examples he coins always have a Victorian governessy flavour; innocent bits of language, in that circumlocutory period, got loaded with unexpected amounts of nervous force. When you are making up your world as you go along there is no safeguard against ingenious exegesis of the null (such as a whole page on a bad distich from a 1913 Cambridge anthology), or against subleties about pronunciation (*God* "begins at the back of your throat, a profound sound, with which you are intimately connected—'ich'—, and then stretches right across to a point above the teeth, from back to front, from low to high, with a maximum of extension and exaltation"). And the Ricardian tenor-vehicle treatment of metaphor comes in patly because words are a way of saying something else, not of placing an intelligible structure of analogies on the page; at bottom nothing is really intelligible anyway, although almost anything turns out to be explicable.

It is no dispraise to Mr. Empson's ingenuity, energy, and industry to find something in their quality consonant with the poems and passages on which he employs them best; low-pressure entertainments like *The Beggar's Opera*, whose strength consists in a jaunty flexibility of tone; or flyweight acrobats of pathos like Hood; or the more colloquial parts of Pope and Chaucer, continuous with the spectrum of urbane chat; or (in works less conducive to composure) the moments when a character is sententiously weighing his wit against the will of a mistress or his littleness against a universe of murk or tragic machinery or

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fate; and the point of the analysis is to show how the tumult of language reflects the way the speaker is placed.

The infectious zest of *Ambiguity* was like that of a boy taking watches apart, but it was at least related to a sense of the wonders of watches. Mr. Empson has always taken poetry seriously, though like Alice confronted by vanishing cats he has always maintained in its presence a disconcerting composure; since poetry like everything else was to his supple Carrollean intelligence a trick we conspire to believe in. It is melancholy that in a book from which much of the enthusiasm has retired he is Alice no longer; he has accommodated himself at length to his own image of the Victorian scientist, who was "believed to have discovered a new kind of Roman virtue", and whom the public could always surprise, as Alice did the White Knight, obliviously head down in his suit of armour, hung with bellows and beehives, "patiently labouring at his absurd but fruitful conceptions."

C. ROLAND WAGNER

A Central Poetry

THE NECESSARY ANGEL, by *Wallace Stevens*. Knopf. $3.00.

IN CONTEMPORARY POETRY IT IS NOT THE FASHION to have a philosophy and to believe in it; a sweeping theoretic vision of life is considered a positive threat to the artistic truthfulness of the sovereign poem. It is a rare pleasure, therefore, to breathe the atmosphere of confidence and wholeness which distinguishes the world of Wallace Stevens. Here, for a change, we are refreshed by certainty without fragmentariness, by joyous possibilities without dishonesty. Here we find a moral and philosophical center through which reality may be repossessed and recreated with each new poetic act. To those who claim that moral order is unnecessary for the making of great poetry, Stevens replies that actual poetry is the embodiment of a theory of poetry, and that a theory of poetry is identical with a theory of life. The moral and theoretic unity of his own poetry is the outcome of the moral and theoretic unity of his beliefs; and so the poetry "helps us to live our lives." These essays, though at times characteristically elusive and tentative, help us to understand the beliefs. They prove Stevens to be the master of a remarkably precise and clear-sighted doctrine which, over the years, his poetry has been actualizing with increasing assurance.

In "Effects of Analogy" Stevens writes that "The poet is constantly concerned with two theories" of poetry. In the first, the imagination is seen as

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an absolute power enabling the poet arbitrarily to put reality to his own uses. Sensing that "his imagination is not wholly his own but that it may be part of a much larger, much more potent imagination . . . [the poet] pushes on and lives, or tries to live, as Paul Valéry did, on the verge of consciousness." The "marginal" poetry that results from a surrender to pure imagination, contrasts with the "central" poetry that results, or ought to result, from the second theory. This "relates to the imagination as a power within [the poet] to have such insights into reality as will make it possible for him to be sufficient as a poet in the very center of consciousness." Now the *effect* of Stevens' own poetry on some readers may very well be marginal, over-abstract and, in a sense, even too "mystical"; but its *intention* (and its effect on other readers), though it makes poetic use of the theory of pure imagination, is to contain that purity and "to press away from mysticism toward that ultimate good sense which we term civilization."

Stevens' concern with consciousness places him unmistakably in our time. But his apparent over-concern with consciousness, his incessant and even repetitious celebration of its possibilities, marks him as not wholly of our time. Most modern writers—at least those who, unlike Valéry, aim at the "disclosures of the normal"—admit (though often under protest) ideality and abstraction, but few are willing to withdraw themselves as far as Stevens does. Even Proust, for example, whose vision of art and life is almost identical with Stevens', had the novelist's greater enthusiasm for the dignity of commonplace truth. Certainly everything that happens to Marcel is explicitly a reiterated spiritual joy for the detached narrator, but for the reader that perpetual joy is always enmeshed with concrete experience. Now Stevens is perfectly at home in the world of solids and movables, but his eye, especially in the later poems, is always directed upward to the spiritual flowering of the "never-ending meditation." With the increasing nobility of his old age, he has approached the viewpoint of Proust's liberated narrator, uttering "this endlessly elaborating poem," this "ever-never-changing same," throughout a diversity of particular poetry. Like Proust's Vinteuil, he pronounces with a single unalterable "accent," the crowning "prayer" of personality—"the same prayer, poured forth before different risings of the inward sun." And it is in his recent volumes that we hear Stevens' "accent" in its most virile, almost naked form. To be sure, this favorable estimate of the later phase is not a popular one in some quarters. Mr. Randall Jarrell, for example, regrets that the early sense of "immediacy and precision and particularity, the live touch of things" has been sacrificed to the "elaboration and artifice and contrivance" of the later work. Poetizing, Mr. Jarrell moans, has given way to "philosophizing . . . alas! philosophizing." Well, the critic is free to enjoy what is given to him to enjoy and free to believe that Stevens is a better poet in *Harmonium* than in *Auroras of Autumn;* but if we, like Stevens, care to regard

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philosophy as something more than the poet's chief occupational hazard, the later central poetry may actually be enjoyed for what it is, a total human response to "the live touch of things."

Stevens' philosophy begins and ends with an acceptance of chaos without submission to chaos. And by chaos I do not mean merely the non-poetic material for poetry. Stevens accepts chaos in the final sense and without evasion—"I name you flatly"; reality has, at bottom, no meaning and no value. It is true, of course, that imagination "perceives the opposite of chaos in chaos," and the resulting imagined reality is also named flatly; but this *valuable* reality—this old world suddenly made new when transformed by the "supreme fiction"—is entirely at the mercy of the reality of chaos. The text of the world in which we read our lives is "A text of intelligent men/ At the center of the unintelligible. . . ."

Central poetry is created out of the interweavings of pure imagination and bare reality. To attain this moral (or artistic) synthesis, a series of rejections is necessary. The most important of these is the rejection of traditional religion. This is constantly implied in Stevens, though it is true that he rarely states his lack of belief without some ambiguity, preferring, no doubt, to remain rather "beyond" rejection of a faith to which he extends considerable sympathy. Unlike Kafka, in whose "deliberate exploits of the abnormal" men are everlastingly metamorphosed into cockroaches, Stevens writes of men momentarily metamorphosed into angels. But he does not believe in angels, *necessary* though they may be as symbols for the moral life. When he speaks of God as "this world's capital idea" or declares that "God and the imagination are one," it seems evident that for Stevens God is a being whose essence does not involve His existence. And only a man who has surrendered all residual belief in religion could suppose that poetry and the arts are a genuine alternative to religion, that they offer, "in their measure, a compensation for what has been lost." The "invisible" truths which men have upheld on faith must give way to truths of the "visible" in acts of disciplined imagination: we must believe that "the visible is the equivalent of the invisible." Then the "false imagination" will be destroyed and religion may be judged as we judge poetry: "not so much that it is actually so as that it must be so"—not so much that God actually exists, as that He is a moral necessity based on contingent experience.

But to Stevens the imagination is endangered less by traditional religion than by its three familiar modern detractors—the romantic, the Freudian and the positivist. Here, perhaps because he is rejecting a fundamental moral outlook (rather than literal beliefs), his criticism is more straightforward. The romantic attitude is unsatisfactory, he tells us, since it "belittles" the great power of the imagination. "The imagination is the liberty of the mind. The romantic is a failure to make use of that liberty . . . The achievement of the romantic . . . lies in minor wish-fulfillments and it is incapable of abstraction." It errs, Stevens intimates, through a tendency to identify the ideal life of imagination

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with the whole life of reality. But the life of imagination is forever *transcending* the reality from which it obtains its life, forever composing and constantly outliving an ideal that is not quite life—"and yet the ideal itself remains alive with an enormous life."

But "if we cleanse the imagination of the taint of the romantic, we still face Freud." Freud discounted the healthy influence of religious illusions in particular, and so implied an unqualified rejection of imaginative illusions in general: "The object of [*The Future of an Illusion*] was to suggest a surrender to reality." Freud looked forward to a primacy of the intelligence in the life of the psyche, but since he admitted that we are now still far from able to live in a state of absolute disillusion, how are we to redeem the time as we await the triumph of the supreme science?—"what have we, if we do not have science, except the imagination?" The rejection of positivism follows. The positivist overlooks the imagination because its existence is not empirically verifiable. He ignores, even more deliberately than Freud, the fact that the imagination is the very instrument of verifiability and must employ illusions for analysis. Both Freud and the positivist fail to realize that consciousness is invincibly imaginative; by discrediting its illusions they tend to reduce consciousness itself to an ethically fruitless entity. Stevens would agree that consciousness (and imagination) is incapable of altering human nature: "Like light, it adds nothing, except itself." But it is precisely this added "nothing," this "savage spirit," which has made all the difference.

A passage from "An Ordinary Evening in New Haven" lays bare the skeleton of Stevens' human philosophy:

> *Inescapable romance, inescapable choice*
> *Of dreams, disillusion as the last illusion,*
> *Reality as a thing seen by the mind. . . .*

Summed up here are Stevens' answers to the four attitudes we have considered. *Religion* calls to us to worship God as the existent ideal: Stevens replies that God is "the supreme poetic idea," the ultimate illusion to which we must come when we have achieved disillusion with respect to all false ideals—when we have made of disillusion our central discipline.[1] The *romantic* ideal offers us complete freedom of the spirit by identifying spirit with the "poem" of reality: Stevens replies simply that "We live in the mind," that reality includes that which is not mind, and that the newly perfected reality which we eventually apprehend is an unreal appearance to the mind. *Freud* advises us to face the grimmest reality grimly unafraid: Stevens replies that reality can be faced truly only when we face it imaginatively; and to face reality imaginatively, or poetically, is to escape it—for "the poetic process is psychologically an escapist

[1]This could be Stevens' answer to Harcourt-Reilly's observation in *The Cocktail Party*: "Disillusion can become itself an illusion/ If we rest in it." For Stevens there is no other place to rest.

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process. . . ." The *positivist* holds that the imagination as metaphysics cannot express the *literal* truth about reality; it can only image the emotions of the metaphysician: Stevens observes that "the imagination as metaphysics, from the point of view of the logical positivist, has at least *seeming* values" (italics mine), and that literal truth itself is valueless until, through the imagination, it issues in a concrete seeming for the mind.

Stevens' poetry sets forth his theory of reality and speaks to us of the human need to master reality; and that theory and that need become a theoretic vision for the reader, incarnate, let us say, in "An Ordinary Evening in New Haven." This poem (or even the isolated passage quoted above) is a new object of moral imagination: insofar as it is successful, it confronts reality anew and transcends reality. The spirit is drawn forth and liberated by the moral power of the poetry; so that each initiated reader is like "a man returning from Nowhere to his village . . . which he has come to cherish and wants to be near"—like Marcel returning to Combray after tasting the madeleine dipped in tea. "He sees without images. But is he not seeing a clarified reality of his own?" And is not this clarified reality, suffused with the colors of moral feeling, the end and justification of all art? Is this not the consummation of life itself? It would be tragic, Stevens believes, not to realize the extent of man's dependence on the arts: "The kind of world that might result from too exclusive a dependence on them has been questioned, as if the discipline of the arts was in no sense a moral discipline."

SONYA RUDIKOFF

Clarity and Force in Gertrude Stein[1]

THE CRITICISM OF GERTRUDE STEIN has long been distinguished by its scarcity. Although frequently mentioned, Miss Stein's work has rarely received more than brief notice, and, with few exceptions, no criticism of serious length and intention has taken her work for its subject. Miss Stein was known more completely as a literary personality than as a writer, and it is her personality rather than her work that has been so often discussed, commended, or condemned. Mr. Sutherland's recent study deals only with Gertrude Stein's *work*, and it is therefore very welcome. The first volume in the Yale edition of Miss Stein's unpublished manuscripts appears at the same time, and the

[1]TWO: GERTRUDE STEIN AND HER BROTHER, AND OTHER EARLY PORTRAITS (1908-12), by *Gertrude Stein*. Yale University Press. $5.00. GERTRUDE STEIN: A BIOGRAPHY OF HER WORK, by *Donald Sutherland*. Yale University Press. $3.75.

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two books provide a good opportunity to consider again some aspects of Miss Stein's work and the curious criticism of it.

Mr. Sutherland's book is short but extremely comprehensive. In it Miss Stein's stylistic periods are examined with care, and the intentions of her work are discussed with reference to a wide range of literary examples. Mr. Sutherland is diligent in his use of various disciplines to illuminate the work. Repeatedly, he will introduce concepts from philosophy, painting, and music, to expand the intellectual background he evokes for Miss Stein, and to clarify her achievement. Mr. Sutherland writes from a thorough knowledge of Gertrude Stein's work, and he is as competent with her lesser known books as he is with her popular ones. He is particularly suggestive in dealing with the absolute finality and immediacy that Miss Stein wanted to achieve. Throughout the book he devotes himself to her writing, but never uses his personal friendship to explain or justify it.

Praise is due to Mr. Sutherland for his unwavering critical focus. We have a finer sense of his contribution if we realize how often the criticism of Miss Stein was constructed from fragments of personal feeling. Mr. Sutherland does not substitute his experience of Miss Stein's personality for an examination of her books. Nor does he resort to memories of her conversation and anecdotes of her wisdom. By not depending solely on the enthusiasm he shares with her other admirers, Mr. Sutherland has done Gertrude Stein a service: he assumes that her work has a significance beyond the force of her actual presence. His book is valuable because it rescues Miss Stein from the notoriety that seemed inevitable for her, and because it may recall us again to her work.

Whether or not one liked her work, Miss Stein's personality was always in question; whoever wrote about her was forced to deal with her personality in some sense. It used to be thought clever for a hostile reviewer to discuss Miss Stein's books by parodying her style. If she was to be noticed at all, it seemed the only way to write about her. Even antipathy could not diminish her personal force. The parody became a dull clever trick, but the wide use of it, like the assertion of enthusiasm, indicates how uncongenial to criticism Miss Stein's work has been, because her personality intrudes everywhere. Thus, even the integrity of Mr. Sutherland's critical approach cannot insure for him the success we expect. He avoids the extreme and obvious submissions to personal feeling, but he shares those attitudes in another form. He does not need to take explicit account of Miss Stein as a personality; this seems a virtue in his method until we see how much he has accepted her sensibility.

It is not simply that he shows too much sympathy, or that he tries too hard in convincing us of Miss Stein's qualities. If it were, we could easily follow his argument, agreeing or disagreeing where it seemed appropriate. But Mr. Sutherland wrote his book as Miss Stein might have written it. He announces himself with her tone: "This will be to explain as much as I understand of what Gertrude Stein did in writing." His formulation of critical problems employs

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her mannerisms, and his prose resembles that of her lectures. Questions are raised in her way, and it is her answers that are given, her terms that are used, as when Mr. Sutherland asks: "The question really is, is an isolated thing and a disconnected thing our kind of thing?" He refers repeatedly to "an American thing," a "20th century thing," "our kind of thing," and to many other "things." The word is ubiquitous; it is always fraught with the possibility of meaning. Whenever Mr. Sutherland does not wish to be more precise, he says "thing." In similar fashion, Miss Stein repeated "anyone" or "anything" when she wanted a suggestive fragment of experience to stand for experience itself.

The fatal attitudes that Mr. Sutherland has assumed determine his arguments. Not only does he remain preoccupied with her intentions, he is also led to make her outrageous comparisons, to use her disconnected associations, to assert the validity of her false naiveté. Initially, he has taken Miss Stein's assumptions for his own, so he must explain Miss Stein exactly as she would have explained herself. We can see it in the way he justifies her fondness for isolated phenomena and her delight in obsessive enumeration:

> It is a child's way of counting or telling anything, and also the way of the *Iliad*, Hesiod, the Old Testament and medieval litanies and prayers. Her constant use of *is* or *makes* as the main verb is a simple sum or equation. Again, it is child's play, but the problem of one is three once split the world apart and the internal fission of the Trinity was as consequential as the fission of the atom.

Or in his plea for the significance of her reduced arithmetical exercises:

> At any rate these simple questions are ultimate operations of the mind, whether they are done by the grade-school child or by Socrates.

These were Miss Stein's ways of vindicating herself, obliquely, by tradition, by human nature, by metaphysics, and, when it proved convenient, by politics. Mr. Sutherland's assumptions require that he also imitate the aspects of Miss Stein's thinking that were least attractive. Thus, we are alway told about what is *shared* by Socrates and the child, but never about how they differ. The role of advocate for Miss Stein demands that a great value be put on comparison, and very little value on discrimination. It is worth noting that the comparisons are made on the basis of a shared artistic intention, and it is the unexpected, the inappropriate comparisons that are most serviceable. Miss Stein, for example, found it useful to compare, in a technical sense, her writing of "Before the Flowers of Friendship Faded Friendship Faded" with Shakespeare's writing of the Sonnets; the work of Joyce, Eliot, Pound, or Gide, never provided such generous company.

Mr. Sutherland proves loyal to his assumptions. At no point does he call seriously into question the goals Miss Stein set for herself. He is indifferent to the themes or directions of her work which she does not state explicitly. His

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interest in her use of language does not go beyond her specific interest in language. He speaks of her intense devotion to the intellect, but it is invariably her own view of the intellect that directs him. The last, and perhaps most interesting, section of his book makes this quite clear, dramatically, in a dialogue with Miss Stein's "ideas." Speaking of the need for playful, as opposed to serious, "ideas," he proposes a conversation:

> It is a pity to interrupt them, but criticism is an interruption to start with, and I should like to call a few ideas out of their games for the chore of a short interview, choosing some that star or at least figure in most of her games.
>
> Q. "How do you do."
>
> A. "Very well I thank you."
>
> Q. Would you care to make a statement?
>
> A. Gladly. "If we say, Do not share, he will not bestow, they can meditate, I am going to do so, we have organized an irregular commonplace and we have made excess return to gambling."
>
> Q. You will not mind if I ask what an irregular commonplace is?
>
> A. Not at all, since the answer is anything. That is, anything is the answer. Or anything is an answer. But to come back to the question. Anything is at once typical and unique. And so anything is "what everybody knows and nobody knows," an irregular commonplace, and Miss Stein was always writing the portrait of that, and of anything.
>
> Q. Do go on.
>
> A. I always do. . . .

And "they" do go on, for twenty pages, first one and then another being called out of their "games." Mr. Sutherland's device indicates a curious relation to ideas. They are flowers in a bouquet, they are engaged in games (Ring around a Rosy?); in the plural, they signify a collection of separate insights, the images of separate phenomena. When given personal wills, they become involved in a disorderly chain-reaction, and Mr. Sutherland can only watch. In the role of interviewer, he shows the passivity which, throughout the book, characterizes his attitude toward Miss Stein's work. His unwillingness to proceed beyond Miss Stein's expressed artistic intentions makes him a foil rather than a critic, and deprives him of any distance from his subject. In the midst of some remarks on writing, Gertrude Stein said: "It is not clarity that is desirable but force." We see how Mr. Sutherland has submitted to the injunction when we realize that one of Miss Stein's "ideas" has the last word of the dialogue, and, at that point, of the book. Mr. Sutherland is destroyed by Miss Stein's ideas exactly when he hopes to redeem them.

When we look at *Two*, it is difficult not to think that Mr. Sutherland's method is the only one possible for writing about Gertrude Stein. Janet Flanner's introduction confirms this method. When Miss Flanner writes on Matisse or on the United Nations, she shows herself quite capable of a brisk,

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serviceable prose, but, like Mr. Sutherland, she can write about Miss Stein's work only by imitating the Stein mannerisms. Her introduction is written from Miss Stein's sensibility, and thus it can only paraphrase Miss Stein's intentions. The portraits in *Two* demand such pleading.

The title portrait, *Two: Gertrude Stein and Her Brother*, shows how much an advocate must do. It is the longest portrait in the book, (143 pages out of 355), and it deals throughout with the characters "he" and "she" in a series of alternating statements like the following:

> In needing being certain that he was completing the telling of what he was telling he was needing to be telling that sound coming out of him was sound that was convincing. In needing to be telling that sound coming out of him was convincing he was needing to be telling that he had been hearing completely hearing the arranging he had been making in arranging the thing he was coming to be telling.
>
> She was needing to be telling that she, being the one who had been convincing, was being the one who had been hearing that which, she being one coming to have conviction, had been what she was completing in telling. She was needing to be continuing, that is she was needing, if she were one having sound coming out of her and sounding, she was needing being one continuing. In continuing she was needing to be one hearing that sound sounding is being existing.

"He" and "she" are primarily concerned with the "sound sounding coming out" of them. One senses a perpetual, and essential, antagonism between them, although they express no feelings toward each other. The feelings have no objects and no relation to any action. Intransitive verbs in the participle forms insure a constant but indefinite meaning, which is immediately apparent though never developed. "He" and "she" make invidious comparisons by asserting repeatedly their separate versions of the same feelings.

Now, this portrait, like all of Miss Stein's portraits, requires elaborate explanation. We should have in mind her relation to her brother. We should recall her interest in the portrait form for presenting essential human types. We should remember her interest in language as a dimension of sensibility. It might also be helpful to consider the usual analogy with painting. We must bring to mind Miss Stein's terms "repetition" and "insistence." Further, we can consider the language of *Two* in relation to the language of *Melanctha*, which was written several years earlier. We may remember Miss Stein's Radcliffe days, her psychological experiments, and her nearness to William James. It would even be interesting to compare the language of *Two* with the language of some notes Leo Stein wrote his sister when they shared the Rue de Fleurus quarters; Leo's apology for not considering Gertrude's feelings, and his analysis of the interaction of their feelings, would be extremely relevant.

But, we must ask, relevant for what? The interesting critical approaches will clarify Miss Stein's intentions considerably, and we may be quite sympathetic

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to her intentions. The portrait, however, will not gain in authority. The relationship of "he" and "she" cannot become other than the vague and static opposition Miss Stein presents. A discussion of Miss Stein's participle forms does not give any more precision or depth to "attacking," "sounding," and "understanding." The range of Miss Stein's purposes is validated but the portrait remains dense. The analogy with painting is no more revealing; although essentially false, it has always proved useful, but it collapses if we consider the distinction between visual and literary ideas. We have only to compare Miss Stein's portrait with, say, *The Portrait of a Lady*—in his way James, too, was interested in essential types—to see how unsatisfactory *Two* is, despite the grandeur of its intentions. Miss Stein's form has many justifications and they are all interesting; but the use *Two* had for her cannot be the use it has for anyone else. Thus, we can say of the portrait that its devices were intended to develop a certain tension of meaning that could not be otherwise achieved. It is not possible to say that they do develop this intended meaning.

The fragmentary and incomplete use of language was always dominant in Miss Stein's work, and it created continual trouble for her critics. Her intentions were more interesting than her actual achievement. Thus, it is true that repetition can be effective, that insight is important. It is true that time and sequence pose artistic problems, that sudden juxtapositions can give a fresh sense of language. These statements are true, but they are not totally true. In order to validate them completely—as Gertrude Stein demands—it must be assumed that all other kinds and uses of language are dead, and that is too large an assumption to make for any writer. We cannot agree so easily with Miss Stein about "a rose is a rose is a rose"; for she thought that in her phrase "the rose is red for the first time in English poetry for a hundred years." We cannot commit ourselves so passionately to Miss Stein's techniques of metonymy and synecdoche. She insisted that a fragment of meaning represented "real" meaning; containers *were* the things contained, parts were wholes, and wholes parts. Eventually the tropes themselves came to stand for literature. Insight took the place of formulation and variety took the place of depth. A literal extension of the tropes into a literary method would always be vindicated by the nature of reality, and Gertrude Stein was a passionate realist.[2]

No writer ever claimed so much as Gertrude Stein claimed. Keats' wish to be among the English poets seems modest compared with her "Think of Homer think of the Bible think of Shakespeare and think of me." Surely, it cannot be a coincidence that Miss Stein alone defies verification. The extravagance

[2]We can consider, for example, her lack of interest in revision. In the sense of a re-seeing, revision invariably demanded of Miss Stein another poem, another play, another portrait. Not only was real revision unnecessary; it would violate the artistic process Gertrude Stein cherished. The reality that interested her was imperious in dictating its own proper form, and revision would mean a tampering with the reality she was so scrupulous to serve.

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of her claims, and the hostility they met with, may be more precisely understood when we note that Miss Stein took *herself* as a center of consciousness. Her system of perception was the device that organized her work. She was never wholly in or wholly out of her books, but her ambiguous presence determined their forms. The self she took as a center was fundamentally passive: it welcomed all phenomena, recorded them minutely, but took no action with regard to them. The self was passive because any other attitude might deprive it of possibility. Any phenomenon could be included because everything was reality, and Miss Stein's purpose was "the exact reproduction of inner and outer reality." And what of the reality to which she submitted? It was a reality of feelings without objects, of qualities without qualification. It was to produce plays without action, descriptions without the thing described, and autobiographies without the self. It was a reality with the center missing, best *reproduced* by "telling something without telling what happened."

FREDERICK MORGAN

Seven Novels[1]

THE NEW NOVEL BY THOMAS MANN must take its place, if not at the side of *Joseph and His Brothers, The Magic Mountain and Doctor Faustus,* at least somewhere not far behind them in any considered estimate of the man who is probably the greatest living novelist. *The Holy Sinner* is, for Mann, a short novel, but not from any standpoint a minor one—even to the extent that one may consider that delightful flight into high comedy, *The Beloved Returns,* a minor work: the new book is squarely based on thematic preoccupations that are central to Mann as novelist and thinker. Indeed, in terms of its depth of projection of a total moral insight, *The Holy Sinner* is as ambitious a novel as Mann has ever written; but what he does not give us here, as not to his purpose, is the wealth of intellectual detail, the elaborate thematic ramifications, the sheer analytical virtuosity that characterize the longer works. Not to his purpose, because he is following a story that is so intense in itself, so narrow and directed, containing so much raw force in the way of primitive guilt, fear and hope, that the narrator's art is bound to narrow down, as it were, upon the

1. THE HOLY SINNER, by *Thomas Mann.* Translated by *H. T. Lowe-Porter.* Knopf. $3.50. SIDDHARTHA, by *Hermann Hesse.* New Directions. $1.50. REQUIEM FOR A NUN, by *William Faulkner.* Random House. $3.00. THE END OF THE AFFAIR, by *Graham Greene.* Viking. $3.00. THE STRANGE CHILDREN, by *Caroline Gordon.* Scribner's. $3.50. BIRTH OF A HERO, by *Herbert Gold.* Viking. $3.50. INTERMISSION, by *Calvin Tomkins.* Viking. $3.00.

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story itself. The play of speculation, the openness to possibilities, is sacrificed properly to some extent to the emotional demands of the tale that is told: it must be given flesh and blood, a surrounding environment and atmosphere, but it is, in this case, already to a large extent conceptually determined. And so we find here, as in the *Joseph* novels, an elaborate and carefully worked setting—like a medieval tapestry—but whereas there the atmosphere is one of seemingly unlimited possibility, open to the world, here it is for the most part confined and intense.

The Holy Sinner is the kind of book that can only be produced by a major writer, with a secure body of work already accomplished, who comes across a subject peculiarly suited to his special preoccupations. In such cases, what seems to be a simple rendering of the subject often turns out to involve the full-scale deployment of the writer's themes and patterns of sensibility, but unobtrusively and without apparent effort. Thomas Mann, we are told, ran across the legend of "Pope Gregorius" in a medieval German verse-epic, while doing research for *Doctor Faustus*. How many of the details of this old version he has retained, I don't know: some worthy applicant for a Ph. D. will sooner or later give us a detailed discussion of the subject. It is plain enough that Mann has fleshed out the bare bones of the tale to give it the particular weight and shape he sought; that he has elaborated a generalized medieval setting that we can from our own vantage-point grasp; that he has invented and given life to minor characters; above all, that he has told the whole tale in his own terms, developing the implications which he saw in it. The result is distinctive and unmistakable.

The story is inextricably involved with the mystery of sin and guilt, and of God's overriding Grace, that descends where it will. Gregory, born of an incestuous union between brother and sister, cast adrift after his birth in a little cask on the waters of the North Sea—to be found by island fishermen and reared by a good abbott—is fated unwittingly to wed his widowed mother, after saving her realm from a wooer's invading armies. When the terrible revelation comes, he accepts the full burden of his guilt (was he not, after all, in some obscure way aware of the significance of his act?). For seventeen years he does lonely penance on a barren island rock, nourished only by a primeval fluid that wells from the earth. And then he is sent for, the Chosen One appointed by God to be one of the greatest of the Popes.

In telling the tale, Thomas Mann has kept a firm balance between the human and what transcends it—the superhuman, or perhaps, the inhuman—; between the terrifying implications of the story and the reasonableness of the underlying attitude, as expressed in the reassuring humanity of the supporting personages and of the pious, humanistic monk who serves so admirably as narrator. It is this balanced perspective that accounts for Mann's great success, here as in other works; while sounding the depths, he keeps a firm grasp of the more immediately perceptible reality. The book is full of *recognition*—juncture of

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the human with the transhuman—and ultimately, of reconciliation. The two great recognition scenes—that between Gregory and Sibylla when they come face-to-face with their guilt; and the later one, in which Gregory, reduced by the years of penance to an ignominiously shrunken and bristling creature like a hedgehog, is made a test of the faith of the two emissaries from Rome—are handled with consummate skill. The latter is particularly impressive for its unflinching fidelity to the essential meaning of the story. Only at the very end of the book was I somewhat disappointed: the greatness of Gregory as Pope (in contrast, for example, to that of the providing Joseph) is not fully presented; instead, we are given a somewhat routine summary of accomplishments. But this is my only objection to a profound and beautiful novel.[2]

Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha* is an example of a particular type of fiction that has long been a temptation to European writers with "poetic" temperaments. Stories written within this convention have an exotic setting; the action centers on the hero's "quest for Truth" through different ways of life; the style tends to be high-flown, and the "Truth" finally attained is usually found to reside in the blurred, orientally-inspired pseudo-mysticism of "acceptance" and "affirmation," so dear to our Jungians and other fuzzy thinkers. *Siddhartha* follows the pattern: for all the competence of the writing and the construction, it lacks both intellectual grasp and emotional truth. The style is merely decorative, "poetic" in the bad sense, lacking a real object; the book as a whole, without roots in real experience, seems to me, for all its superficial elegance, finally trivial.

William Faulkner, to finish off with the Nobel prizewinners, has given us a sequel to *Sanctuary* written largely in dramatic form, which can only by courtesy be called a novel at all. *Requiem for a Nun* is concerned with the situation created by Temple Drake, now married to Gowan Stevens and twice a mother, when, driven by guilt and a nostalgia for evil, she entangles herself with the younger brother of the hoodlum who was her lover in *Sanctuary*. The book is divided into three "acts," each introduced by a descriptive and narrative sequence centering, respectively, on the Yoknapatawpha County Courthouse, the Capitol dome at Jackson, and the county jail. The first forty-odd pages—"The Courthouse"—are the best in the book. Here is first-rate Faulkner: the imaginative sweep, the firm sense of place and of the past, the rolling rhetoric that never quite becomes excessive. This introductory chapter, and the two that come later, give a certain unity of setting, but one whose relation to the main action is asserted rather than artistically established.

[2]A word about the translation: Mrs. Lowe-Porter, always an admirable translator, seems this time to have outdone herself. Archaisms, medievalisms, passages of dialect and of colloquial speech, other passages of rhyming in rough epic mode, the nobility and distinction of the overall prose style—all is brought over without flaw into English that is clear, apt and resonant. It is a superb job.

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For the violent and melodramatic action of *Requiem for a Nun*, presented in dramatic form with stage-directions, seems desperately unreal in contrast, say, to the reality of the Courthouse as Faulkner has grasped it. Thus the book must be accounted a pretty complete failure; its parts do not make up a whole, and its central impetus, the action itself, is frustrated. Faulkner's procedure here is comparable to that of a champion prize-fighter who ties both hands behind his back and tries to kick his opponent into submission. In adopting the dramatic form he has forsaken his most powerful artistic weapons: the insight which, by putting him inside the minds and sensibilities of his personages, gives him a firm grasp of their actuality within the world of his novels, and the concomitant release of his enormous verbal powers. Instead, this is the kind of thing we find:

> TEMPLE (crushes cigarette into tray): Then listen. Listen carefully. (She stands, tense, rigid, facing him, staring at him.) Temple Drake is dead. Temple Drake will have been dead six years longer than Nancy Mannigoe will ever be. If all Nancy Mannigoe has to save her is Temple Drake, then God help Nancy Mannigoe. Now get out of here.

—which is not bad for what it is, but not good enough for Faulkner or for the successful realization of his aims.

So we have bare bones that do not live, a machine that cannot function. Faulkner is no dramatist; there are no indications here of any theatrical sense that would bring the work to life on the stage.[3] Why, then, did he attempt this method of putting across his story? I puzzled over this at first. Granted that in the writing Faulkner may have had in mind a stage peopled by living actors; this is not what the writing itself implies. Then it came clear. What Faulkner has actually written is a movie scenario. The camera is needed to give to the action the added dimension and significance supplied, in Faulkner's best novels, by his splendid prose. A great director might conceivably do just that, but until one does, we have no work of art. Meanwhile, it is notable that the tough talk, the understated passion, and the crushing-out of cigarettes are all tried-and-true conventions of the contemporary fashionable hard-boiled film; and Temple Drake herself, in this book, seems cut to the pattern popularized by Miss Lauren Bacall and other sulky-and-sultry film heroines.

A certain moral obtuseness seems to go along with the book's formal inadequacy. Faulkner's purpose is deeply serious; in his own way he is wrestling with problems of guilt and salvation similar to those which occupy Thomas Mann in *The Holy Sinner*. But, unlike Mann, Faulkner is unable fully to objectify his purpose and bring it to light. At the close, Nancy Mannigoe, Temple's colored servant-girl, a former prostitute and dope-addict, is in jail awaiting execution: she has murdered Temple's baby in protest of the mother's infidelity. She awaits her end with resignation, convinced of her salvation:

[3]Plans for a Broadway production, incidentally, seem to have been shelved. The long, pedantic speeches assigned to Gavin Stevens are enough in themselves to sink any play.

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"All you need, all you have to do, is just believe." "Believe what?" she is asked. "Just believe." . . . I am not concerned with the psychology here. The point is that the lines epitomize the whole weight and direction of the action. Nancy's belief without an object mirrors the action as a whole, which itself is unfocussed and without object. And the action, taken itself as object in turn, is not *known* by Faulkner in the way that the Courthouse is known by him. In this book, Faulkner has left his personages within the dark and blurred confines of a mechanically melodramatic situation. It would seem to be another indication of a decline in creative power, noticeable in his recent work, and coming at the very time when he has gained his widest—and deserved—recognition.

Graham Greene's *The End of the Affair* is one of those novels that remind me inescapably of a well-trimmed hedge. It is there, to be looked at, to be admired even for its regularity and design; but it does not hold the attention for very long. Nor does it seem, after the reading, to have added very much to one's experience or awareness. Although it is carefully constructed and far more "successful" as a whole than, for example, *Requiem for a Nun*, there is nothing in it that begins to compare with the "Courthouse" section, nor is there the sense of potentiality that can be found even in Faulkner's worst writing.

This amounts, I suppose, to an unfavorable judgment on Greene's essential capacity as a writer. Or perhaps to something less drastic but more obscure: to a criticism of whatever it is that is blocking his talent, bottling it up, permitting it to express itself only in terms of a wilfully diagrammatic situation and almost exclusively on the level of mechanical craftsmanship. That there is, or was, a certain order of talent is undeniable: think of *Brighton Rock;* nor is *The End of the Affair* by any means the work of an untalented writer.

But it is a book that has been, excessively, willed and forced, as if the writer's conscious intention was largely disengaged from his total personality and sensibility. It is all very well for a novelist to work with a conscious plan—and in so far as I understand Greene's, I am highly sympathetic to it—but one looks for more in a novel, or in any work of art. And this tale of a woman who turns from lover and husband to God, who proceeds through sin to sanctity, is, for all its craftsmanship, pretty impoverished on the level of felt experience. That is to say, the high ambition of the conscious plan is not fulfilled in the quality of the novel's perceptions, and this is particularly true in the account of the "miracles" at the close. Throughout, the clipped and pared-down style lacks edge, because it is not really doing any work of perceiving, but simply filling in the outlines of the well-trimmed plot.

Greene is at his best in putting across the bitter misunderstanding of the rather sordid love-affair, with undertones of frustration and violence. The suggestion is that the nihilism of *Brighton Rock*, the Manichean despair of the

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natural order,[4] is still central to his sense of life. And so, because art has its roots in the natural order, the novelist finds himself in an unhappy predicament. The despair cannot be coped with artistically at the deepest level, because it is itself, among other things, a denial of art. Hence the conscious effort of the will—a desperate effort, which seems to me to do great credit to the man—to deal wtih matters in its own way; and the resultant work: skilful and laudable in terms of conscious intention, but tragically lacking the deeper resources that are ultimately necessary.

It is not often that one reads a novel that seems to have grown naturally and without strain, true to itself, nourished by the writer's intelligence and sensibility but not coerced by his will. *The Strange Children* is such a novel. Caroline Gordon has long been recognized as one of our best novelists; this seems to me to be her best book, possessing as it does a richness of substance beyond anything I have found in her earlier writing.

It is a modest book and an honest one, without a grain of pretense or touch of falsity. It is also an uncommonly firm book, secured by accurate perception and by experience that has been felt and assimilated. The story is unfolded from the point of view of a nine-year-old girl; this approach presented in itself a great challange, in view of the abuse of the child-observer in much contemporary fiction. Miss Gordon handles it with notable success. During the course of the book Lucy Lewis grows; she comes to learn something of the devious ways of the human heart; at the close she is granted a measure of light. And we, as we read, also learn and grow, and finally share in the illumination. By "illumination" here, I mean nothing along the lines of what is attempted, for example, in *Siddhartha*, no elaborated vision of a peculiar form of experience. I mean, rather, the small hard extra bit of understanding we can sometimes wrest from the ordinary experience of our every-day living. It is this kind of illumination which the book gives, by moving us inwardly and sharpening slightly our vision—and without any effort to compel our acceptance at the level of conscious reasoning.

Miss Gordon has not trimmed down her insights in any attempt to make them conform to a predetermined plan. Thus the action of her novel grows naturally from the reality of the persons and their setting in present-day Tennessee, a reality which the writer has grasped and *knows*. Sarah Lewis, Lucy's mother, daughter of Alec Maury (Miss Gordon's most celebrated character) and through him linked to the Old South explored by the writer in earlier novels; Stephen Lewis, the father, an intellectual at work on a book on the Civil War; their visitors: the poet "Uncle Tubby," Kevin Reardon the Catholic convert and his strange and lovely wife; the MacDonough family, poor tenants and Holy Rollers—from the soil of the writer's understanding of these people, nourished by her firm sense of place and situation, the novel grows as a living

[4]Brilliantly discussed by Donat O'Donnell in his essay on Greene.

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thing. Within it, the crucial objects or events take on both mystery and significance, as they would, to a heightened awareness, in real life: a crucifix, stolen by Lucy from Reardon and later returned by her; the story "Undine" which Lucy is reading; a game of charades; a pony; a revival meeting at which a man is bitten by a rattlesnake; the strange, half-veiled love-affair between Isabel and Uncle Tubby, and their elopement at the end.

The story has, then, larger and symbolic meanings, to the extent that we care and are able to pursue them. They are not insisted upon by the writer; still less do they form a conscious scheme into which she has coerced her material. They are the natural overtones of experience truly assimilated and accurately presented in one of the finest novels of recent years.

A brief mention, finally, of two first novels of exceptional promise: *Birth of a Hero*, by Herbert Gold, and *Intermission*, by Calvin Tomkins. As writers, the two show contrasting methods and sensibilities, but each is, in his way, highly talented. Gold has a strong sense of detail, of the relevance of the materiality of objects and impressions, and an acute psychological awareness. His novel is close-packed, dense with sense-impression and symbolic association; some episodes are brought to fine dramatic life, but at other times one does not see the forest for the trees: the larger purpose or design seems obscured or lost. Tomkins, on the other hand, shows a grasp of narrative pace and of the delineation of action. His novel is dry, sparse and architectonic; in its build-up to a touching climax, it gives a "clean" effect, at the expense of appearing at times a little empty or thin. Each book, in its own way, is a demonstration of one of the novelist's central problems: how much of the material of life can be coped with, and kept alive, within the intention of the work?

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1933, AND JULY 2, 1946 (Title 39, United States Code, Section 233) of The Hudson Review, published quarterly at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1951.

1. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, The Hudson Review, Inc., 439 West Street, New York 14, N. Y.; Editors, William Arrowsmith, Joseph Bennett and Frederick Morgan; Managing Editor, Lisa Dyer, all same address.

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4. Paragraphs 2 and 3 include, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting; also the statements in the two paragraphs show the affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner. LISA DYER, Managing Editor

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 1st day of October, 1951

WILLIAM G. NIBLETTE

(My commission expires March 30, 1952.)

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